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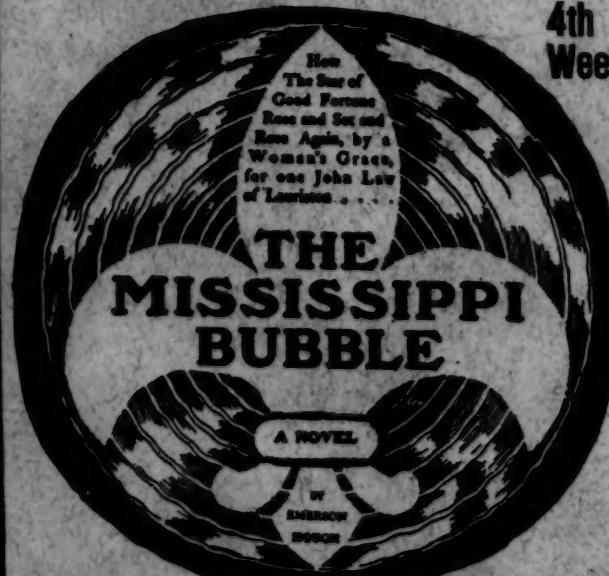
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CLARISSA'S TROUBLESOME BABY

By Edward S. Van Zile

And while the wheel of birth and death
turns round
That which hath been must be between us
two.

—Sir Edwin Arnold.

I WAS alone in the nursery with the baby, a chubby boy whose eight months of life had amazingly increased his weight and vigor, when I heard the crack of doom issuing from his miniature mouth!

I wonder if your imagination is strong enough to put you, for a moment, in my place. Suppose that you had dismissed the nurse for a time that you might have a mother's frolic in the twilight with your only child, the blessing that had come to you as a reward for marrying again after five years of widowhood. Suppose that the baby, opening his little eyes to their widest extent, had said to you, as my baby said to me:

"You don't seem to recognize me, my dear, but I've come back to you."

Wedded to Tom, already jealous of your maternal fondness for the boy, what effect would Jack's voice, silenced five years ago by death, have had on you, rising in gruff maturity from a baby's tiny throat? Was it strange that I came within a hair's breadth of dropping the uncanny child to the floor? Mechanically I glanced over my shoulder, in cold dread lest the nurse might return at any moment. Then I found courage to glance down into the baby's upturned face. There was something in the child's eyes so old and wise that I realized my ears had not deceived me—I had not been the victim of a hallucination resulting from the strain

of an afternoon of calls and teas. The conviction came on me, like an icy douche, that I was standing there in a stunning afternoon costume, holding my first husband in my arms and liable to let him fall if our weird tête-à-tête should be sharply interrupted.

"You aren't glad to see me," grumbled Jack, wiggling uneasily against my gloves and coat. "But it isn't my fault that I'm here, Clarissa. There's a lot of reincarnation going on, you know, and a fellow has to take his chances."

Softly I stole to a chair and seated myself, holding the baby on my trembling knees.

"Are you—are you—comfortable, Jack?" I managed to whisper, falteringly, the thought flashing through my mind that I had gone suddenly insane.

"Keep quiet, can't you?" he pleaded. "Don't shake so! I'm not a rattle-box. I wish you'd tell the nurse, Clarissa, to put a stick in my milk, will you? There's a horrible sameness to my present diet that is absolutely cloying. Will you stop shaking? I can't stand it."

By a strong effort of will I controlled my nervous tremors, glancing apprehensively at the door through which the nurse must presently return.

"There, that's better," commented Jack, contentedly. "You don't know much about us, do you, Clarissa?"

"About—about—who?" I gasped, wondering if he meant spirits.

"About babies," he said, with a wiggle and a chuckle that both attracted and repelled me. "Where's your handkerchief? Wipe my nose—pardon me, Clarissa, that sounds vul-

gar, doesn't it? But what the deuce am I to do? I'm absolutely helpless, don't you know?"

I could feel the tears near my eyes, as I gently touched the puckered baby face with a bit of lace.

"There was only one chance in ten thousand millions that I should come here," went on Jack, apologetically. "It's tough on you, Clarissa. Do you think that you can stand it? I've heard the nurse say that I make a pretty good baby."

I sat speechless for a time, trying to adapt myself to new conditions so startling and fantastic that I expected to waken presently from this dream—a dream that promised to become a nightmare. But there was an infernal realism about the whole affair that had impressed me from the first. Jack's matter-of-fact way of accepting the situation was so strikingly characteristic of him that I had felt, at once, a strong temptation to laugh aloud.

"I want you to make me a promise, Clarissa," he said, presently, seizing one of my gloved fingers with his fat little dimpled hand and making queer mouths, as if he were trying to whistle. "You won't tell—ah—Tom, will you? He wouldn't understand it at all. I don't myself, and I've been through it, don't you see? In a way, of course, it's mighty bad form. I know that. I feel it deeply. But I was powerless, Clarissa. You know I never took any stock in those Oriental philosophies. I was always laughing at Buddhism, metempsychosis, and that kind of thing. But there's really something in it, don't you think? Keep quiet, will you? You're shaking me up again."

"There's more in it than I had ever imagined, Jack," I remarked, gloomily. "Of course, I'll say nothing to Tom about it. It'll have to be our secret. I understand that."

"You'll have to be very careful about what you call me before people, Clarissa," said the baby, presently. "My new name's Horatio, isn't it? What the dickens did you call me that for? I always hated the name Horatio."

"It was Tom's choice," I murmured. "I'm sorry you don't like it—Jack."

"If you called me 'Jack' for short—no, that wouldn't do. Tom wouldn't like it, would he? Your handkerchief again, please. Thank you, my dear. By the way, Clarissa, I wish you'd tell the nurse that she gets my bath too hot in the morning. I'd like a cold shower, if she doesn't mind."

"You'll have to adapt yourself to circumstances, my child," I remarked, wearily, wondering if this horrible ordeal would never come to an end. I longed to get away by myself, to think it all over and quiet my nerves, if possible, before I should be forced to meet Tom at dinner.

"Adapt myself to circumstances!" exclaimed Jack, bitterly, kicking savagely with his tiny feet at his long white gown. "Don't get sarcastic, Clarissa, or I'll yell. If I told the nurse the truth, where'd you be?"

"Jack!" I cried, in consternation. There seemed to be a hideous threat in his words.

"You'd better call me Horatio, for practice," he said, calmly, but I could feel him chuckling against my arm. "I'll get used to it after a time. But it's a fool name, just the same. How about the cold shower?"

"Jack," I said, angrily, "I'll put you in your crib and leave you alone in the dark if you annoy me. You must be good! Your nurse knows what kind of a bath you should have."

"And she'll know who I am, if you leave me here alone, Clarissa," he exclaimed, doubling up his funny little fists and shaking them in the air. "I've got the whip-hand of you, my dear, even if I am only a baby. By the way, Clarissa, how old am I?"

"Eight months, Jack," I managed to answer, a chill sensation creeping over me, as the shadows deepened in the room and a mysterious horror clutched at my heart. I am not a dreamer by temperament; I am, in fact, rather practical and commonplace in my mental tendencies, but there was something awful in the revelation made to me, which seemed to

change my whole attitude toward the universe and filled me, for the moment, with a novel dread of my surroundings. I was recalled sharply to a less fantastic mood by Jack's querulous voice:

"Will you stop shaking, Clarissa?" he cried, petulantly. "You make me feel like a milk-bottle with delirium tremens. Call the nurse, will you? She hasn't got palsy in her knees. I want to go to sleep."

At that instant the nurse hustled into the room, apologizing for her long absence.

"I'm going to make a slight change in his diet, Mrs. Minturn," she explained, taking Jack from my arms and gazing down with professional satisfaction at his cherubic face. "He's in fine condition—aren't you, you tunnin' 'ittle baby boy? But he's old enough to have a bit of variety now and then. There are several preparations that I've found very satisfactory in other cases, and I've ordered one of them for—there, there, 'ittle Horatio! Don't 'oo cry! Kiss 'oo mamma, and then 'oo'll go sleepy-bye."

As I bent down to press my lips against the baby's fat cheek, I caught a gleam in his eyes that the nurse could not see, and, unless my ears deceived me, Jack whispered "Damn!" under his breath.

II

As in the world of dream whose mystic shades
Are cast by still more mystic substances,
We ofttimes have an unreflecting sense,
A silent consciousness of some things past.

—Richard Monckton Milnes.

I REMEMBER that Tom impressed me as an extremely handsome man, as he faced me across the dinner-table and smilingly congratulated me on my appearance.

"You must have had an interesting day, Clare. You look very animated. I am so glad that you are beginning to get around a bit. There's a golden mean, you know. A woman should become a slave to neither society nor the nursery."

I realized that there was an abnor-

mal vivacity in my manner as I added: "Nor to her husband, Tom. Do you accept the amendment?"

"Do you imply that I am inclined to be tyrannical, my dear?" he asked, laughingly. "It's not that, Clare. But I can't help being jealous of you. How's the baby?"

My wine-glass trembled in my hand, and I replaced it on the table, not daring to raise it to my lips. "He grows more interesting every day, Tom," I answered, truthfully. "You don't appreciate him." I wanted to laugh hysterically, but managed to control myself.

"Don't I, though?" cried Tom, protestingly. "He's the finest boy that ever happened, Clare, and I'm the proudest father. But I don't believe in a man's making an ass of himself all over the place because there's a baby in the house. After all, it's hereditary, so to speak, and quite common."

I glanced at the butler, but his wooden face showed no comprehension of the bad taste of Tom's remarks. I was glad of that, for Tom has earned a reputation among all classes for always saying and doing the right thing at the right time. I could not help wondering how he would act if I should tell him over our coffee that my first husband was in the nursery, doomed to another round of earthly experience in the outward seeming of Horatio Minturn.

"Forgive me, Clare," implored Tom, misinterpreting the expression of my face. "I didn't intend to hurt your feelings, my dear. And you mustn't do me an injustice. You have hinted several times of late that I am not as fond of the baby as I should be. Now, I know exactly what you mean, and I—"

"Suppose, Tom, that we defer further discussion of the subject until later on," I suggested, realizing that I was losing rapidly my grip on my nerves. "Tell me about your day. Where have you been? What have you done? Whom have you seen?"

It was not until we were seated in the smoking-room and Tom had lighted a long black cigar that he returned to the topic I had learned to dread. Heretofore, Tom's interest in the baby had seemed to me to be intermittent and never very intense. To-night it struck me as persistent and painfully strong.

"What I was going to say, Clare, when you interrupted me at the table," he recommenced, gazing at me thoughtfully through a nimbus of tobacco smoke, "was this: Theoretically, I am a fond and enthusiastic father; practically, I haven't seen the baby more than a dozen times—and he has always yelled at sight of me."

I laughed aloud, nervously, and Tom's glance had in it much astonishment and a little annoyance.

"It's hardly a subject for merriment, is it?" he queried, coldly. "You accuse me of not appreciating Horatio. May I ask you, my dear, when I have had an opportunity of observing his—ah—good points, so to speak? To be frank with you, Clare, and to paraphrase a popular song, 'all babies look alike to me.'"

"But there are great differences among them, Tom," I cried, impulsively; and again a touch of hysteria got into my voice.

"And ours, of course, is the finest in the world," he remarked, good-naturedly. "But what I was getting at, Clare, is this: I want to become better acquainted with the boy. He's old enough now, isn't he, to begin to—what is it they call it?—take notice?"

"Oh, yes," I managed to answer, without breaking down. If Tom would only change the subject! But how could I lead his mind to other things? Surely, I couldn't tell him flatly that hereafter the baby must be a tabooed topic between us, that there really was not any Horatio, that the law of psychic evolution through repeated reincarnations was making in our nursery a demonstration unprecedented in our knowledge of the race. All that I could do was to sit

silent, pressing my cold hands together, and endeavor to prevent Tom from observing my increasing agitation.

"He sits up and takes notice," repeated Tom, as if proud of his old nurse's phrase. "Well, it's about time that Horatio ceased to treat me with that antagonistic uproariousness that has characterized his demeanor hitherto in my presence. I have decided to cultivate his acquaintance, Clare, and I need your help."

"He's—he's very young, Tom," I remarked, catching at a straw as I sank.

"I actually believe that you're jealous of the boy, my dear," cried Tom, laughingly. "Frankly, I'm greatly disappointed at your reception of my suggestion. You're so illogical, Clare! In one breath you charge me with lack of appreciation of the baby, and in the next you intimate that he's too young to endure my society. You place me in a very awkward position. I had honestly thought to please you, but I seem to have made a mess of it."

I was sorry for Tom, and realized that the accusation he had made against me was just. For a moment the mad project flashed through my mind of telling him the whole truth, the weird, absurd, unprecedented fact that lay at the bottom of my apparent inconsistency. But the instant that the thought took shape in unspoken words I rejected it as wildly impracticable. Furthermore, there had come to me, under the matter-of-fact influences surrounding me, a possibility that appealed to me as founded on common sense. Was it not reasonable to suppose that I had been the victim before dinner of overwrought nerves, of a hallucination that could be readily explained by purely scientific methods? I had gone to the nursery worn out by social exertions to which I had not been recently accustomed. Alone with the baby in the twilight, would it have been strange if I had fallen asleep for a moment and had

dreamed that the child was talking to me? As I looked back on the episode at this moment, it appeared to me more like the vagary of a transient doze than an actual occurrence. Even the "Damn!" that had seemed to issue from Horatio's tiny mouth as I had kissed his cheek might have been merely the tag-end of an interrupted nightmare, the reflex action of my disordered nervous system.

"You haven't made a mess of it, Tom," I said, presently, "and you have pleased me. The baby's old enough to—to—"

"To find my companionship bracing and enlightening?" suggested Tom, merrily.

"Yes, he's old enough for that," I answered, lightly, glad to feel the fog of my uncanny impressions disappearing before the sunlight of a rising conviction. With every minute that passed thus gaily in Tom's companionship, the certainty grew on me that in the nursery I had been the prey of nervous exhaustion, not the helpless protagonist of a startling psychic drama.

"I'll tell you what we'll do, Clare," remarked Tom, toward the close of an evening that had grown constantly more enjoyable to me as time passed, and, as I playfully misquoted to myself, Horatio was himself again, "I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll come home to luncheon to-morrow and we'll have the baby down from the nursery. I suppose we're all out of high chairs; but you can telephone for one in the morning, my dear."

"But, Tom, Horatio is—is only eight months old," I protested. "He—he doesn't know how to act at the table."

"Well, I'll teach him, then," cried Tom, paternally. "He needs a few lessons in manners, Clare. He has always treated me with the most astounding rudeness. It's really time for him to come under my influence, don't you think? Of course, I may be wrong. I don't know much about these matters, but I can learn

a thing or two by experimenting with Horatio."

"He doesn't like his—" I began, impulsively, and then laughed, rather foolishly. The influence of my dream, it appeared, was still on me.

"Doesn't like what?" asked Tom, eying me searchingly, evidently surprised at my untimely hilarity.

"Game and salads and other luncheon things," I explained, adroitly, suddenly glad that the evening was at an end and that I could soon quiet my throbbing nerves by sleep.

"We'll have some bread and milk for him," suggested Tom, hospitably. "Maybe he won't yell at me if we give him something to eat—something in his line, you know."

Again I succumbed to temptation and laughed aloud. "How little you know about babies, Tom," I remarked, in my most superior way; but even as I spoke the horrible suspicion crept over me again that I, also, might have much to learn about my own little boy.

III

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
Which makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a something that came and went.
—James Russell Lowell.

I LUNCHED with Tom and Jack the next day. It was an appalling function, driving me to the very verge of hysteria and destroying forever my belief in my dream theory. My first husband sat in his new high chair, pounding the table with a spoon, as if calling the meeting to order, while my second husband sat gazing at the baby with a fatuous smile on his handsome face that testified to his inability to rise to the situation. Behind the baby's chair stood his nurse, evidently prepared to defend her prerogatives as the protector of the child's health. Lurking in the background was the phlegmatic butler, no better pleased than the nurse at this experiment of Tom's.

"That's it! Go it, Horatio!" cried

Tom, nervously. "Hit the table again, my boy. That's what it's for."

"I thought that your idea, Tom, was to teach Horatio how to behave in public," I suggested, playfully, still calm in the belief that I had been deceived in the nursery by a dream.

"But, as you said, Clare," argued Tom, "he's very young. It's really not bad form, you know, for a baby to pound a table with a spoon. Is it, nurse?"

"I think not, sir," answered the nurse, pushing the high chair back to its place. The baby had kicked it away from the table while Tom was speaking.

"Isn't he—isn't he rather—ah—nervous, my dear?" asked Tom, glancing at me with paternal solicitude. "It's quite normal, this—ah—tendency to bang things—and kick?"

"Perhaps he's hungry, Tom," I suggested, lightly. My spirits were rising. In the presence of the baby, whose appearance and manner were those of a healthy child something under a year in age, the absurdity of my recent incipient nightmare was so evident that I blushed at the recollection of my nonsensical panic. Reincarnation? Bah! what silly rubbish we do get from the far East!

"Of course he's hungry," assented Tom, glancing down at a bird the butler had put before him. "With your permission, nurse, I'll give the youngster a square meal. How would a bit of the breast from this partridge do? It's very tender and digestible—"

"How absurd, Tom!" I cried. "He'd choke!"

"He's choking as it is!" exclaimed Tom, half rising from his chair. "Pat him on the back, nurse!"

"He's all right, sir," said the nurse, calmly, as Horatio's cheeks lost their sudden flush and he opened his pretty little eyes again. "You needn't worry, Mr. Minturn. He's in perfect health, sir."

"Aren't they queer?" exclaimed Tom, glancing at me, laughingly.

"Sir?" cried the nurse, in pained amazement.

"I meant babies, nurse," explained Tom, soothingly, motioning to the disaffected butler to refill his wine-glass. "But, look here, Clare; you and I are eating and drinking heartily, but poor little Horatio is still the hungry victim of a dietary debate. What is he to have?—milk?"

The baby leaned forward in his chair, seized his empty silver bowl with a chubby hand, and hurled it to the floor.

"Horatio!" Tom's voice was stern as he scowled at the mischievous youngster. I could not refrain from laughing aloud.

"Is that bad form, Tom, for a little baby?" I asked, mischievously.

"No," answered Tom, repentantly. "I don't blame you at all, Horatio. Your prejudice, my boy, against an empty bowl when you are both hungry and thirsty is not unnatural. Give him some bread and milk, nurse, or he'll overturn the table. What a wonderful study it is, Clare, to watch a baby develop! Do you know, Horatio is actually able to grasp a syllogism?"

"Or a milk-bowl," I added.

"Don't interrupt my scientific train of thought," protested Tom, gazing musingly at the child. "I saw his mind at work just now. 'I'm hungry,' thought Horatio. 'There's my silver bowl. The bowl is empty. There are bread and milk in the house. If I throw the empty bowl on the floor, my nurse will return it to me filled with food. So here goes! Q. E. D.' Clever baby, isn't he?"

It was at that moment I met the baby's eyes, and a sharp chill ran down my back and found its way to my finger-tips. There was an expression in the child's troubled gaze so eloquent that its meaning flashed on me at once. If the baby had cried aloud, "What an amazing fool that man is!" I could not have been more sure than I was of the thought that had passed through his infantile mind.

"What's the matter, Clare?" I heard Tom asking me, apprehensively. "Do you feel faint?"

"Not at all," I hastened to say, turning my eyes from my first to my second husband. The former was eating bread and milk—reluctantly, it seemed to me—from a spoon manipulated by his nurse. That it was really Jack who was sitting there in a high chair, doomed to swallow baby food while he craved partridge and Burgundy was a conviction that had come to me for a fleeting moment, to be followed by a return to conventional common sense and a renewed satisfaction in my environment. Tom sat opposite me, smiling contentedly, while between us, at a side of the table, the baby perfunctorily absorbed a simple but nutritious diet, deftly presented to his tiny mouth by his attentive nurse. It was a charming scene of domestic bliss at that moment, and I realized clearly how much I had to lose by giving way, even intermittently, to the wretched hallucinations that my overwrought nerves begot.

"Just look at him, Clare!" exclaimed Tom, presently. "I tell you it's an interesting study. It's elevating and enlightening, my dear. To an evolutionist there's a world of meaning in that baby's enthusiasm for bread and milk. Here he sits at a table covered with gastronomic luxuries and actually rejoices in the simplest kind of food. You see, Clare, how well the difference between Horatio and myself in regard to diet illustrates Spencer's definition of evolution as a continuous change from indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to definite, coherent heterogeneity through successive differentiations and integrations. Great Scott, nurse! What's the matter with him? He's choking again!"

"It's nothing, sir," remarked the nurse, quietly, as the baby recovered from a fit of coughing to resume his meal. "But, if you'll pardon the remark, sir, I think that he's much better off in the nursery."

It was not a tactful suggestion, and I knew that Tom felt hurt; but he maintained his self-control and made no further comment, merely glancing at me with a smile in his eyes. I real-

ized, with a vague uneasiness, that open and active hostilities between baby's nurse and Tom were among the possibilities of the near future, and it was not a pleasing thought.

"What does he top off with?" asked Tom, presently, grinning at Horatio, who had emptied his bowl and had stuck a fist into his rosebud mouth, as if still hungry. "Have you got an ice for him, James?"

The butler stood motionless, gazing fixedly at the nurse.

"What queer ideas you have, Tom!" I cried, to break the strain of an uncomfortable situation. "An ice would give him an awful pain."

"Perhaps he'd like a Welsh rabbit, then?" growled Tom, crossly.

The baby seized a spoon and rapped gleefully on the table.

"Isn't he cunning!" I cried, delightedly. "He's happy now, isn't he? I am inclined to think, Tom, that he'd rather have a nap than a rabbit."

"Not on your life!" came a deep, gruff voice from nowhere in particular. I looked at Tom in amazement, thinking that he had playfully disguised his tones and was poking fun at me and the baby. But Tom's expression of wonderment was as genuine as my own, while the nurse was gazing over her shoulder at the butler, who was eying us all in a bewildered way. Tom glanced at the nurse.

"Leave the room, James," he said, hotly. "I'll see you later in the smoking-room." Then, to the nurse: "Remove the baby, will you, please? Thank you for letting us have him for an hour."

As soon as we were alone in the dining-room, Tom leaned toward me and said: "Shall I discharge James, my dear? He was most infernally impudent, to put it mildly."

But the frightful certainty had come to me that the butler was innocent of any wrong-doing. Absurd as the bald statement of fact seemed to be, my first husband was the guilty man, and, struggle as I might against the conviction, I knew it.

"Give him another chance, Tom," I

managed to say, my voice unsteady and my tongue parched. "James was not quite himself, I imagine. I'm not well, Tom. Give me a swallow of cognac, will you, please?"

Tom, alarmed at my voice and face, hastily handed me a stimulant, and presently I felt my courage and my color coming back to me.

IV

The priceless sight
Springs to its curious organ, and the ear
Learns strangely to detect the articulate air
In its unseen divisions, and the tongue
Gets its miraculous lesson with the rest.

—N. P. Willis.

I LONGED, yet dreaded, to have an hour alone with the baby. I could no longer doubt that, through some psychical mischance, Jack's soul had found a lodgment in a family hospitable by habit and inclination, but not accustomed to disquieting intrusions. It was thus that I put the matter to myself, as I sat alone in my boudoir after luncheon, having dismissed Marie, my maid, with a message to Horatio's nurse; and the conventional make-up of my thought revealed to me, in a flash of insight, the materialistic tendencies of my mental methods. Metapsychosis had never assumed to my mind the dignity of even a philosophical working hypothesis. Much less had the idea ever come to me that reincarnation actually furnished a process through which the physical laws of evolution and the conservation of energy might find a psychical demonstration.

My natural inclination to take the world as I found it, and to leave the inner mysteries of life to profounder minds than mine, had been intensified by my association with Tom, a disciple of Haeckel, Büchner and other extremists of the materialistic school. I had come to admire Tom's intellectuality and to find satisfaction in the fact that his fondness for scientific studies would strengthen him to resist the temptations that surrounded him to become a mere man of leisure and lux-

ury. Possessed of great wealth and without a profession, it was fortunate for Tom that he had found in scientific research an outlet for his superabundant energies. He had begun to make a reputation for himself as a clear-headed, well-balanced evolutionist, both conservative in method and progressive in spirit, and at our table could be found at times the leading scientific minds of New York. And now, into our little stronghold of enlightened materialism had been dropped a miraculous mystery, or mysterious miracle, that had overthrown all my preconceived ideas of the universe and opened before me a limitless field of groping conjecture. I realized, with due gratitude to fate, that if I had been born with an imaginative, poetical temperament my present predicament would have driven me insane at the outset. Fortunately for everybody concerned, I am a woman who rebounds quickly from the severest nervous shock, and I have taken a great deal of pride in retaining my mental poise in crises of my life that would have made hysteria excusable.

Nevertheless, it was a severe test of my nervous strength to hold Horatio in my arms at four o'clock that afternoon and watch his nurse donning her coat and hat preparatory to a short ride with Marie. I had carefully planned this opportunity for an uninterrupted hour with the baby, but now that it lay just before me I longed to run away from it. The nursery had become to me a temple of mysteries within which I felt chilled and awe-stricken, a victim of supernatural forces against which I was both rebellious and powerless.

After the nurse had left the room I seated myself in a rocking-chair, cuddling Horatio in my arms and softly humming a lullaby, attempting to deceive myself by the thought that I really wished him to sleep for an hour. In my innermost consciousness lay the conviction that I had actually come to the nursery for a heart-to-heart talk with Jack. My deepest desire was to be quickly gratified. A gruff whisper

came to me presently from his pretty lips.

"Stop that 'bye-bye, baby,' will you, Clarissa?" he said, petulantly. "Haven't I had enough annoyance for one day?"

"Hush! hush!" I murmured, rocking frantically in the effort to put the child to sleep, despite my realization of the utter inconsistency of my action.

"Don't! don't!" growled the baby. "Do you want me to have *mal-de-mer*, Clarissa? I can't be responsible for what may happen. Where did everybody get the notion that a baby must be shaken after taking? It's getting to be an unbearable nuisance, Clarissa."

"Is that better, Jack?" I whispered, holding him upright on my knees and peering down into his disturbed face, puckered into a little knot, as if he were about to cry aloud.

"Thank you," he muttered, gratefully. "Under the circumstances, my dear, perhaps it's well that I didn't get that Welsh rabbit. But, frankly, I was bitterly disappointed at the moment."

"What can you expect, Jack?" I asked, argumentatively, again astonished at the matter-of-fact way in which I was handling this astounding crisis. "You seem to have a man's appetite but only a baby's digestive apparatus."

"That's my punishment, Clarissa," he explained, in awe-struck tones. "In the former cycle I ate too many rabbits. That was scored against me, under the general head of 'Gluttony' and the sub-title 'Midnight Unnecessaries.' I'm up against it, Clarissa. I wouldn't complain if it were merely a question of not getting what I want. But it's getting what I don't want that jars me. You understand, of course, my dear, that, generally speaking, I refer to milk. Isn't there something in its place that you could persuade the nurse to give me? Don't babies get—er—malt extract, for instance?"

"I'll do what I can for you, Jack," I said, suddenly struck by a brilliant idea. "But I must make a condition, and you must make me a promise."

"I'd promise you anything for a change of diet," muttered Jack, kicking vigorously with his tiny legs and waving his fat fists in the air.

"If you'll swear to me, Jack, never to speak aloud again unless you and I are alone together, I'll agree to make every effort in my power to add to your physical comforts."

"Comforts be—blown!" exclaimed the baby, crossly. "What I want are a few luxuries. And, furthermore, my dear, I'm getting very weary of that machine-made nurse. She's narrow, Clarissa. I don't wish to speak harshly about a woman whose heart seems to be in the right place, but you must get rid of her, if you care a continental rap about your little baby. You'll have to fill her place, Clarissa, with somebody more broad-minded and up-to-date. She bores me to death."

"You don't mean that you've been talking to her, Jack?" I cried, horrified.

"That's not necessary," growled the child. "What with her 'ittle baby go to sleepy,' and 'now, Horatio, 'oo dear 'ittle pet lambie,' she freezes the words upon my tongue. Another thing, Clarissa, that you can't fully understand — I'm not permitted, through psychological conditions that you cannot grasp, to talk to anybody but you. It will relieve your mind to know that I'm as dumb as a— as a real baby when you're not within hearing."

"I'm so glad of that, Jack," I exclaimed, impulsively. "From things you've said before, I had obtained a different impression."

"I was only trying to scare you, Clarissa," remarked Jack, mischievously. "But I've told you the truth at last. By the way, what a stupendous idiot Tom Minturn is! How in the world did you happen to marry him?"

"Jack," I cried, angrily, "I am amazed at your lack of good taste. You are hardly in a position to do Tom justice. Unless you refrain from making such brutal remarks in the future, I shall leave you entirely to the care of the nurse."

"And be accused of neglecting your only child," suggested the baby, slyly.

I had not grasped the full scope of this clever remark, before I was startled by a quick step in the hallway, the throwing open of the door, and the sound of Tom's voice, crying:

"Oh, here you are! I've found you at last, have I? What a pretty picture you make, Clare, there in the half-lights with the baby on your knees. How is the dear little chap? Poor fellow, he must have thought that his dismissal from the luncheon-table was rather abrupt."

"What an ass he is!" whispered Jack, under his breath. Then he began to cry lustily, as had been his custom whenever Tom had deigned to enter the nursery.

V

Yes, 'tis my dire misfortune now
To hang between two ties,
To hold within my furrowed brow
The earth's clay, and the skies.
—*Victor Hugo.*

Tom had come to the nursery in high spirits and with the best possible intentions. Freed from the depressing presence of the nurse and butler he had argued, I felt sure, that now was the time for a frolic with the baby that should put their relations upon a smoother footing. He had said to me, more than once, that little Horatio's apparent prejudice against him was due to the fact that hirelings were always coming between children and parents in these latter days.

The baby's voice, however, was still for war. I did not dare to trot him upon my knees, knowing his prejudice against a shaking, so I sat there gazing up at Tom's smiling face in perplexity and holding my first husband, now howling lustily, firmly upright on my lap.

"Let me take him, my dear," suggested Tom, with what struck me as rather artificial enthusiasm. "I'll walk with him awhile. It may quiet him."

To my astonishment, the baby stopped crying at once, as Tom bent down and clasped him, rather awkwardly, in his arms. Hope began to dance merrily in my heart, and I laughed aloud. It was a sight to bring smiles to the saddest face. Tom paced up and down the nursery, sedately, furtively watching Jack, as he nestled against his shoulder, making no sound and apparently contented for the moment with the situation. But a sudden fear fell on me. The thought that this might be the calm before the storm flashed through my mind, and the lightning of premonition was almost instantly followed by the thunder of fulfilment.

"What the dickens!" cried Tom, in anger and amazement. Jack, having deftly hurled Tom's eye-glasses to the floor, had begun to pummel his nose with one hand while he pulled his hair with the other, making strange, guttural sounds the while that were unlike anything that had ever issued from his baby throat before.

"Take him away, will you, Clare?" implored Tom, wildly. "He's the worst that ever happened. What's the matter with him?"

"Perhaps he's sleepy, Tom," I suggested, uncertain whether I should laugh or weep, as I removed the baby from my second husband's arms. "What a bad little boy you have been, Horatio!" I managed to say, chidingly, wondering if nature had not designed me for an actress.

"He ought to be spanked," growled Tom, bending to the floor to grope for his eye-glasses in the twilight.

"Spanked, eh?" whispered the baby, close to my ear. "We'll see about that. I've got it in for him, all right. Just wait!"

"Hush! hush!" I implored him, hurrying back to the rocking-chair, to get as far away from Tom as possible.

"What an infernal temper the boy has," remarked the latter, standing erect again and replacing his eye-

glasses upon his nose. "I'm afraid my visit to the nursery has not been a success, Clare," he added, as he stalked to the doorway, evidently sorely hurt at heart.

When we were alone together again, I planted the baby firmly on my knees and bent down till I could look straight into his tear-stained eyes.

"You are very unkind, Jack," I said to him, earnestly. "Have you ever paused to consider what you are here for? Of course, I'm a convert to the theory of reincarnation. You're sufficient proof of its truth. As I understand it, it is incumbent upon you to lead a better life this time than you led before. Frankly, Jack, you aren't beginning well."

"I realize that, Clarissa," said the baby, repentantly. "If I don't brace up, I'll make a terrible mess of it, and my next birth'll be sure to jar me. Maybe I'll be doomed to show up in Chicago—or even Brooklyn. If you care anything about my—ah—psychical future, my dear, you'll keep Tom Minturn away from me. He's so confoundedly patronizing! He's actually insufferable, my dear. Did you hear him quoting Herbert Spencer at the table, gazing at me all the while as if I were some kind of a germ that might develop in time? And the funny part of it is, Clarissa, that I am a sage, and he's nothing but a misguided ignoramus."

"But Tom has the reputation of being quite learned, Jack," I protested. "He's an active member of the Darwin Society, and has just been elected to the Association for the Promulgation of the Doctrine of Evolution."

"And the dead, steered by the dumb, moved upward with the flood," quoted the baby, somewhat irrelevantly, I thought. "They are blind leaders of the blind, Clarissa. I could tell Tom in a minute more than he'll ever know if he always clings to the idea that the universe is a machine that was made by chance and is run by luck. But I

shain't take the trouble to give him the tip. He'll know a thing or two some day. Meanwhile, my dear, you'd better keep him away from me. If worse comes to the worst you might send me to some institution. I realize, bitterly enough, that I'll be an awful nuisance to you if you keep me here."

I felt the tears coming into my eyes, and impulsively I drew the baby closer to me. I was in the most deplorable predicament that my imagination could conceive, torn by conflicting emotions and horrified by the awful possibilities presented to me by the immediate future. If Tom, through Jack's hot temper, should discover the truth, and be forced suddenly to abandon materialism by coming face to face with a convincing psychical demonstration, what would happen? I shuddered, there in the gloaming, as my mind dwelt reluctantly upon the unprecedented perils menacing my happiness. It was no comfort to my distraught soul to realize that, in all probability, no woman, since the world began, had been afflicted in just this way. Neither was there any relief in the conviction that I had been in no way to blame for this incongruous psychical visitation.

"No, I couldn't send you away, Jack," I said, musingly; "that is practically impossible. We'll have to make the best of it, and our successful manipulation of the situation depends almost wholly upon your self-control. You must adapt yourself to your environment, my boy; become a baby in fact as well as in theory. You'll be happier that way."

"Don't talk nonsense, Clarissa," grumbled Jack, kicking viciously at his long clothes. "I'm the victim of what might be called a temporary maladjustment of the machinery of psychical evolution. Ordinarily, a baby is not cognizant of a former existence. You advise me to forget the past and remember only that I am your cunning little eight-months-

old Horatio. If I only could! It's the only thing that could give me permanent relief, my dear. But it's not possible. Here I am doomed to a kind of dual punishment, ashamed of myself as Horatio and afraid of myself as Jack. And all because I clogged my psychical progress in my late life by a carnal craving for Welsh rabbits! It sounds absurd, doesn't it, when one puts it into words? But, my dear, the sublime and the ridiculous are as close together in one realm of existence as in another. Truth has many faces, and there's always a grin on one of them."

"I think that I hear your nurse coming, Jack," I whispered. "Is there anything that I can do for you?"

"Yes," he answered, excitedly, lowering his voice, however. "Do you think, Clarissa, that you could secrete a flask of bottled cocktails in the room somewhere? I've learned a thing or two of late that might prove useful to me if I needed a stimulant and knew where to find it. I can raise my body by my arms and hold up my whole weight for ten minutes at a time. I've been experimenting at night, when the nurse was asleep. Tom's an evolutionist; ask him about it. He'll explain to you how it happens. You'll bring the cocktails, my dear?"

I hesitated, bewildered by his request; daring neither to grant nor deny it. The nurse was half-way down the hall, and nearing the door rapidly.

"Take your choice, Clarissa," whispered the baby, coolly. "Unless you promise me at once, I shall tell the nurse who I am the moment she enters the room."

My heart sprang chokingly into my throat, and I whispered, hoarsely:

"Very well, Jack. I'll do as you wish. But do be careful, won't you? Don't take more than a sip at a time, will you?"

Before the baby could reply, the nurse had entered the room, smiling gaily.

VI

We have forgot what we have been,
And what we are we little know.
—Thomas W. Parsons.

THERE was not the least doubt that our dinner in honor of the German biologist, Plätner, had been a tremendous success. Long before we had reached the game course I had caught the gleam of triumph in Tom's eyes, and across the long board my gaze had met his in joyous congratulation. It was no merely personal glory that we had won by this well-conceived and smoothly executed social function. In a way, we had vindicated our caste, had proved to a censorious world that the inner circle of metropolitan society is not wholly frivolous, utterly indifferent to the achievements of genius and the marvelous feats of modern science.

When Tom had first suggested to me the possibility of our entertaining Plätner, whose efforts to manufacture artificial protoplasm have aroused the enthusiasm of materialists in all parts of the world, I had fought shy of the project. Tom's idea was to gather at our table the most noted scientists of the city, with the German biologist as the magnet, and to select our women from among the cleverest of our set, once vulgarly known as the "Four Hundred." Upon his first presentation of the scheme I had argued that it was impracticable, that the scientists would find our women frivolous, and that our women would be horribly bored by the sages. Even up to the moment of our entrance to the dining-room I had been annoyed by the fear that my pessimistic attitude toward the function was to be vindicated, that Tom's effort to make oil and water mix was doomed to failure.

And the funniest thing about the whole affair is that we were saved from disaster and raised to glory through the quaint personality of the Herr Doctor, our guest of honor. A typical German savant in appearance, with spectacles, beard and agitated hair, he displayed from the outset a perfect self-

control beneath which, one quickly realized, glowed the fires of a fine enthusiasm. Speaking French or English with a fluency that was enviable, he aired his hobby in a genial, entertaining way, which saved him from being the bore that a man with an *idée fixe* is so apt to prove. Protoplasm may seem to be a most unpromising topic upon which to base the conversation at a fashionable dinner-party, but I found myself intensely interested, before the oyster plates had been removed, in the scientific discussion that the learned Herr Doctor had set in motion and which Tom had deftly kept alive.

"I had been impressed, years ago," Plätner had begun, in answer to a polite question from Mrs. "Ned" Farrington, who is a very tactful woman, "I had been impressed by the similarity of protoplasm to a fine froth." Here the German scientist held an oyster poised on a fork and gazed at it musingly, the while he continued, in almost flawless English: "The most available froth, soap lather, is made up of air bubbles entangled in soap solution. After years of experimenting, my friends, I succeeded in making an oil foam from soapy water and olive oil. Under the microscope my solution closely resembles protoplasm."

"Does it, really?" cried Mrs. "Ned," rapturously.

"Wonderful!" commented Professor Shanks, America's most noted zoologist.

"It's curious," remarked Elinor Scarsdale, rather cleverly, I thought, "that from protoplasm to the highest civilization there should have been a struggle from soap to soap."

The Herr Doctor glanced approvingly at the brightest débutante of the season.

"In those words, young lady," he said, with flattering emphasis, "you have summed up the whole history of physical evolution. But to continue: My drops of oil foam act as if they were alive, their movements bearing a most marvelous resemblance to the activities of *Pelomyxa*, a jelly-like marine creature, protoplasmic in its simplic-

ity." The Herr Doctor was again addressing his remarks to his oyster fork.

"Do I understand you, Dr. Plätner?" asked Tom, from the foot of the table, "that, under the microscope, rhizopod protoplasm, for example, would resemble your—ah—oil foam?"

"So closely, sir," answered Herr Plätner, instantly, "that I have often deceived the most expert microscopists in Germany. Furthermore, Mr. Minturn, my artificial protoplasm retains its activity for long periods of time. I made one drop, sir, that was alive, so to speak, for six days."

"And then it died?" asked Mrs. "Ned," mournfully.

"To speak unscientifically, yes," answered the German, carefully. "Now, what are we to gather from all this, my friends?" The butler had removed the oysters, and the Herr Doctor was forced to glance at his audience.

"New reverence for soap and olive oil," suggested one of the younger scientists, a professor at a neighboring university.

Plätner eyed the speaker suspiciously, and then said:

"That, of course, sir; but much more than that. I have proved conclusively, my friends, that the primary movements of life are due to structure, and that there is absolutely no necessity for believing in any peculiar vital essence or force. The living cell, I confidently assert, may be built up out of inert matter. The old-fashioned idea of a vital spark being absolutely essential is as obsolete as the belief in special creation. Let me live a hundred years, my friends, and I'll make for you a Goethe or a Shakespeare out of soap lather and olive oil."

"Just imagine it!" exclaimed Mrs. Farrington, gazing with exaggerated admiration at the German genius.

"It's really not so shocking to our pride of ancestry as it seems at first sight," Tom ventured to suggest. "Our generation has become reconciled, perforce, to its humble origin. It is hard for us to realize how severely Darwinism shocked our fathers and mothers."

"As I understand you, Dr. Plätner," broke in Mrs. "Bob" Vincent, turning the blaze of her great, dark eyes full upon the German's face, "your discovery is a triumph for the extreme materialists? It destroys absolutely all the bases upon which the belief in psychic forces rests? We are machines, wound up to run for a while, and then to stop forever?"

"You have practically stated my creed, madam," answered the Herr Doctor, gravely. "Constant motion, constant change—these are the alpha and the omega of the universe. Why should we superimpose the concept of a psychical existence upon a structure that is already perfect? As I said in other words, my friends, I could, if sufficient time were granted to me, rebuild the earth and its creatures in my laboratory."

"Provided that it was situated near a barber shop and a delicatessen store," whispered Dr. Hopkins, who had been listening in silence on my left to our guest of honor. I was glad to hear this subdued note of protest from so eminent a source, but he shook his gray head as I glanced at him approvingly. Professor Hopkins, Ph.D., loves science but hates controversy. Had he crossed swords at that moment with the German he would have found, I imagine, that the sympathies of my guests were with the materialist. When a scientist frankly tells you that he can manufacture protoplasm, and goes on to describe to you his method of procedure, it's well to pause before plunging into an argument with him. But I, who had good reason to know that Herr Plätner was ludicrously at fault in his conception of the universe, could not but regret that so brilliant a champion as Dr. Hopkins had not rushed to the defense of the truth. For a moment I was almost tempted to defy the rules of hospitality and voice the new faith that had come to me in the existence of psychic mysteries. This inclination was intensified by Herr Plätner's answer to a question put to him by one of the men.

"It's all the veriest rubbish," I heard

the German saying, with great emphasis. "All those Oriental philosophies and religions are merely picturesque presentments of the truths that are baldly stated by modern materialism, so-called. What is Nirvana but simply cessation of motion? Admitting reincarnation, for example, as a working hypothesis, it would mean simply the coming and going of atomic vibrations with successive losses of identity. They are dreamers, those Orientals, seeing half truths clearly enough, but never following them out to their logical conclusions."

"And yet the East is the mother of lather and olive oil," murmured Dr. Hopkins, under his breath.

At that instant my heart leaped into my throat, and I sprang to my feet in affright. With Horatio in her arms, his nurse had rushed frantically into the dining-room, despite the interference of the butler, and, with blanched face and staring eyes, was bearing down on me, with the purpose, evidently, of thrusting the baby into my grasp.

"Take him! Take him!" she cried, hysterically, and before I could resist her insistence, Horatio was squirming in my bare arms. "He's bewitched," continued his nurse, frantically. "He's been talking like a man. I'm through with him. He ain't a baby! You just wait a moment, Mrs. Minturn. He'll speak again in a moment. He's got a voice like a steam calliope. And what he says! Oh, my!"

"Take her away at once," Tom was crying to the butler. "She has gone crazy," he went on, rushing past our astounded guests to my assistance. "Don't be frightened, my dear! I always thought that she was unbalanced, and now I know it. Poor little Horatio! He looks scared to death!"

VII

We know these things are so, we ask not why,
But act and follow as the dream goes on.

—*Lord Houghton.*

"Isn't he a lovely baby!"
"Don't send him away, Mrs. Minturn."

"Get his high chair for him, James."

"See him smile! I don't wonder at his relief. Just imagine being in the care of a crazy nurse!"

"What wild eyes she had! You say she was always eccentric, Mr. Minturn?"

"The baby's only eight months old? Really, Mrs. Minturn, he looks older."

"He has such pretty eyes! And look at the dimples in his little hands. Doesn't he ever cry? How good he is, dear little fellow!"

"Horatio! What a fine, dignified name! Horatio held a bridge, didn't he? or was it a full house?"

"What a question for a famous scientist to ask!"

The baby, erect and smiling in his high chair, had wonderfully enlivened our dinner-party. Even Tom, startled as he had been by the advent of the distraught nurse, was now wholly at his ease and beamed genially from the foot of the table upon the youngster, who seemed to be delighted at the attention that he was receiving from beautiful women and famous men. As he sat there, merrily waving a spoon in the air and crowing lustily, I watched him with mingled pride and consternation. Although a most distressing episode had been brought to a picturesque conclusion, there seemed to me to be startling possibilities in the present situation. I did not like the flush upon the baby's cheeks, the unnatural gleam in his laughing eyes. Impulsively I bent down and kissed him upon his pretty mouth. My worst fears were instantly realized, and I felt my spinal marrow turn to ice. I had detected the odor of a cocktail upon Horatio's—or, rather, Jack's—breath.

"I am forced to acknowledge, madam," I heard Herr Plätner saying, in answer to one of Mrs. Farringdon's leading questions, "I am forced to acknowledge that my theories destroy much of the poetry of life. It is a most prosaic attitude that I am forced to hold toward yonder most beautiful baby, for example. Romance would point to him as an immortal soul in embryo. Realism asserts that he is a machine, like the rest of us, with a

longer lease of activity before him than you or I have, who have been ticking, so to speak, for several years."

"Be good, Horatio!" I whispered. "Don't cry. You can have an ice pretty soon."

The baby brought his spoon down upon the table with a thump, and actually glared at the German professor, while my guests laughed gaily at the child's precocious demonstration.

"Isn't he cunning!" exclaimed Elinor Scarsdale, delightedly.

"He seems to have a prejudice against me, *nicht wahr?*" remarked the Herr Doctor, laughing aloud.

"You aren't to blame for that, little boy," murmured Dr. Hopkins, so that I alone could hear him. "He says that you are sprung from oil and lather and are rushing toward annihilation."

"Bah!" yelled the baby. "Bah! bah! bah!"

"Ba-ba, ba-ba, black sheep, have 'oo any wool?" quoted Professor Rogers, the noted comparative philologist, who has identified the germ of epic poetry in the earliest known cradle songs.

"Isn't he fascinating!" cried Elinor Scarsdale, referring to the baby, not to the philologist.

"If you'll excuse me for a time," I said to my guests, seeing that Tom was growing weary of Horatio's prominence at the table, "I'll take the baby to the nursery."

"You'll do it at your peril," I heard a deep voice grumble, and Dr. Hopkins jumped nervously and glanced at me in amazement.

"Don't run off with him, Mrs. Minturn," cried Mrs. Farringdon; and her protest was sustained by a chorus of "don't" and "do let him stay."

"It may be only temporary," I heard Dr. Plätner saying, as he gazed at Professor Shanks, who had asked him, evidently, a question about the baby's nurse. "It's not an uncommon form of insanity, and may be only temporary. I recall an instance of a very learned and perfectly harmless professor at Göttingen who believed for years that his pet cat talked San-

skirt to him. There was at my own university a young man wholly sane, apparently, who made a record of conversations that he had held with the skeleton of a gorilla. Both of these men were eventually restored to mental health, and have never had a return of their delusions. It is fortunate, however, that the poor woman, whose insanity we have so recently witnessed, exhibited her mania at this time. What might have happened otherwise to that charming little baby I shudder to think."

Horatio was pounding the table with a spoon, as if applauding the Herr Doctor's remarks. Suddenly he dropped the spoon and made a grab for Dr. Hopkins's wine-glass.

"What vivacity he has!" remarked Professor Shanks, as if addressing a roomful of students interested in a zoological specimen.

"He seems to know a rare vintage when he sees it," suggested Dr. Hopkins, intending, of course, to compliment his hostess.

"I think, my dear—" began Tom, nervously.

"Don't go any further, Mr. Minturn," cried Elinor Scarsdale, playfully. "The baby is so much more interesting than—"

"Protoplasm," added Dr. Hopkins, under his breath.

Dr. Plätner was gazing at the baby searchingly. He had been impressed evidently by certain eccentricities in Horatio's bearing.

"How old did you say the boy was, madam?" asked the German savant, presently.

"Eight months," I answered, a catch in my voice that I could not control.

"He's—ah—very intelligent for a child of that age," commented Plätner, laboring under the mistake that he was saying something complimentary. "He has a most expressive face."

As the baby was scowling savagely at the German at that moment, and frantically shaking his little fists at him, there were both pith and point to the latter's remark.

"Rot!" muttered Jack, wickedly.

I sprang to my feet and lifted him from his chair. He kicked protestingly for a moment, and gave vent to a yell that bore witness to his possession of a marvelous pair of lungs.

"Be quiet, Horatio," I whispered, imploringly, hurrying toward the door, without further apology to my guests. "If you'll be silent now, I'll have a bottle of champagne brought to the nursery."

At these words the baby nestled affectionately in my arms, and I felt that the fight was won. Just as we reached the doorway, however, Jack clambered to my shoulder and waved his little fist defiantly at my guests.

"Damn that frowsy old German donkey!" he muttered, close to my ear. "I'd give half a bottle of cocktails to prove to him what an amazing ignoramus he is! Just wait a minute, will you, Clarissa?"

I rushed out of the dining-room without more ado. In another instant Jack would have said the word that trembled on his tiny mouth, the word that would have brought the whole temple of modern materialism toppling down upon Herr Plätner's devoted head.

VIII

Methinks that e'en through my laughter
Oft trembles a strain of dread;
A shivery ghost of laughter
That is loath to rise from the dead.
—*Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen.*

THE nursery was in a condition of much disorder as I entered it with the baby's arms around my neck. Much to my surprise and delight, Jack had fallen asleep as we mounted the stairs. How to get him into his crib without rousing him was a problem that I longed to solve, although I had determined not to return to the dining-room. I would send a maid presently to tell the butler to inform Tom that I could not leave the baby at this crisis. Surely our guests would consider a crazy nurse sufficient excuse for the retirement of their hostess.

But Jack opened his little eyes and crowed, rather hilariously, as I laid him on his pillows.

"Don't go, my dear Clarissa," he said, his baby tones strangely out of harmony with his words. "I have much to say to you at once. I owe you an explanation and apology. Sit down, won't you?"

"Keep quiet, Jack," I whispered. "I'll be back in a moment."

After I had despatched a servant to the dining-room with my message to Tom, and had assured myself that the baby's hysterical nurse had left the house—poor woman, I was sincerely sorry for her!—I returned to the nursery and shut myself in, with a feeling of great relief. So intense, indeed, was my nervous reaction after hours of varied emotions that I sank at once into a chair to check a sensation of dizziness that had come over me as I crossed the room.

"Isn't this cozy!" exclaimed the baby, kneeling at the side of his crib and striving to touch me with his fat, uncertain little hands. "I wanted to say to you, Clarissa, that I did not deliberately plan to frighten that tyrannical nurse of mine. To tell you the truth, my dear, I had taken just one swallow too much of those cocktails and was astonished to discover that, while thus slightly elevated, so to speak, I could communicate in the language of maturity with this—ah—comparative stranger. Naturally, it was a great shock to the nurse. As I remarked to you before, my dear, she's narrow. A more broad-minded woman would not have rushed before the public making a kind of Balaam's ass of a helpless baby. But she's been discharged, of course?"

"She has gone away, if that's what you mean," I answered, laughing rather hysterically. "How do you account for your sudden loquacity in her presence, Jack?"

"That's a mystery," said the baby, screwing up his tiny mouth into a funny little knot. "Spirits had something to do with it, I suppose."

"Spirits!" I repeated, nervously.

"Yes," responded Jack, clapping his palms together with a ludicrously infantile gesture. "You see, my dear, there were spirits in the cocktail. To tell you the truth, Clarissa, I'm a bit scared. I'm going to swear off. By the way, did you order that champagne?"

"No," I answered, curtly.

"Well, perhaps it's better, on the whole, that you didn't," sighed the baby, tumbling back on his pillows and waving his chubby legs in the air. "I've about made up my mind, my dear, to lead a better life. It'll be easier for me to be good than it has been, now that the nurse is gone. She was so narrow, Clarissa. It was always on my mind, and it finally drove me to drink."

"I'll have to replace her at once, Jack," I remarked, drawing my chair closer to the crib. "What—ah—that is—have you some idea as to just what kind of a nurse you'd like?"

The baby was on his knees again at the side of the crib, waving his expressive fists in the air.

"Understand me, Clarissa," he said, sternly, "I refuse to risk my life again by placing myself in the power of a hireling nurse. You can't expect people of that kind to be open to new ideas. To a man of my temperament, my dear, you must realize that repeated doses of baby-talk are actually cloying. If you could engage some broad-minded, elderly woman who had been deaf and dumb from birth, I might put up with her for a while. But, of course, it would be hard to find such a prize. You'll have to look after your little baby yourself, my dear, until I'm a few years older. It'll be hard for you. I realize that, Clarissa. But, frankly, is there any other alternative? If I'm to lead a better life, my dear, I must have some encouragement."

I leaned back in my chair, and closed my eyes wearily. The burden that had been thrust upon me was growing greater than I could bear.

"We'll postpone this discussion un-

til to-morrow, Jack," I said, presently. "I must think it all out carefully before I can come to a decision. Meanwhile, you'd better go to sleep. It's getting late, you know."

"You aren't going to leave me here alone, Clarissa?" cried the baby, nervously. "You'd better not. There'll be trouble if you do."

The fact was that I was in a quandary as to what was the proper thing to do, under the circumstances. I had only just begun to realize how many problems had been solved by the presence of the nurse. At this time of night it was impossible, of course, to get anybody to take her place. At such a crisis as this the natural solution of the problem lay in my temporary occupancy of her position. But I shrank from the obligation that fate had so unkindly thrust upon me. Lifting the very willing baby from the crib, I carried him to a rocking-chair, hoping that I might get him to sleep while I came thoughtfully to a determination regarding my course of action for the immediate future.

"Gently!" murmured Jack, cuddling gratefully in my arms. "A long, slow, dreamy kind of rocking is not so bad, Clarissa. It's the tempestuous, jerky style that I object to. That confounded nurse had a secret sorrow. It used to bother her whenever she got me into this chair. She'd groan and weep and swing me up and down, as if she were trying to pulverize her grief, with me as the hammer. Then I'd begin to yell, and she'd rock all the harder. You can't imagine, Clarissa, what your little Horatio has suffered of late."

I laughed aloud, nervously, knowing that my merriment had a cruel sound, but unable to control it.

"Did you think that I was joking?" growled Jack, clutching at my chin, angrily.

"Forgive me, Jack!" I exclaimed, repentantly. "I know that you've had an awfully hard time, poor boy. And I promise you that I shall try my best to make life easier for you,

from now on. And now, Jack, do try to get to sleep! I'll see to it that you are perfectly comfortable tonight, and to-morrow we'll talk about the future. Would you like to have me sing to you, Jack, as I rock you?"

The baby fairly shook with suppressed laughter at the suggestion.

"Doesn't it seem absurd, Clarissa?" he gasped, between chuckles. "Just imagine what it really means. You're about to hum hush-a-bye-baby to Number One, while Number Two is downstairs talking scientific rubbish to a lot of old fogies! If you should ever write your memoirs, my dear——"

"Hush, Jack!" I cried, petulantly, setting the chair in motion. "I shall never write anything for publication."

"Nonsense," commented the baby, drowsily. "Everybody does. You'll be sure to try it on some day. What a story you could tell, couldn't you, my dear? You might call it, with my permission, 'Clarissa's Troublesome Baby.'"

IX

It would be curious if we should find science and philosophy taking up again the old theory of metempsychosis. But stranger things have happened in the history of human opinion.

—James Freeman Clarke.

It was only through the exercise of the nicest care that I escaped a complete nervous collapse during the weeks immediately following our now famous dinner to Herr Plätner. I was tempted at times to run off to Europe and leave my fevered household to fend for itself. I seemed to spend the larger part of my time in keeping Jack quiet and Tom cool. Which was the more difficult task I am unable to say. Jack remained stubbornly unreasonable regarding the kind of nurse he was willing to submit to, while Tom grumbled continually because I spent so much time with the baby.

"What is the trouble in the nursery, Clarissa?" the latter asked me

one morning at breakfast. "You have tried ten different experiments there since that crazy woman left us, and now you tell me that her place is again vacant. We pay the highest wages, Horatio is not a sickly, fretful child, but still these alleged nurses come and go, offering, so far as I can learn, only the flimsiest excuses for throwing up a seemingly desirable situation. There must be something radically wrong up there. Have you any idea, my dear, what it is?"

How could I tell Tom the truth about the matter? Had I informed him that the baby still insisted upon my engaging an elderly woman deaf and dumb from birth, and refused to adapt himself to any one of the many compromises that I had offered to him, Tom would have been justified in suspecting the existence of insanity germs in our nursery. He had seen one woman issue therefrom in an apparently crazy condition, and he had noted the eccentric fickleness of her successors. If I should now lay the actual facts before him, he would have good reason to believe that I also had lost my mental balance. At that moment there came to me a vague dread of my second husband's scientific habit of mind. It was evident that he was bent upon collecting data about the baby and his nurses, in order that he might reach some reasonable conclusion in explanation of the existing disturbed conditions in our formerly unruffled household. And the unfortunate part of it was that Tom had the leisure and, I feared, the inclination to wrestle with this problem until he had solved it in some way satisfactory to his exacting mind.

"The root of the trouble, Tom," I answered, presently, after carefully weighing my words before uttering them, "the root of the trouble is not in the baby or the nursery or the wages—or in me. It is to be found in the great change that is going on in the conditions of domes-

tic service. A child's nurse to-day—I mean one of the kind that we would be willing to employ—is a highly-trained specialist who has grown haughty and despotic in the mere exercise of her profession. She realizes that the demand for experts in her line is greater than the supply, and—"

"I see," interrupted Tom, rather rudely, I thought. "But it does seem to me that if other people in our position, Clare, can find satisfactory nurses, we should not be the one family in the city that is forced to take care of its own baby. I am willing to pay any amount of money to insure Horatio's comfort. I'll admit that he is difficult at times. He seems to be a very sensitive, highly-strung child, but there's nothing abnormal about him. He's pugnacious and hot-tempered, but most healthy boy babies are inclined to be spunky, aren't they? What I object to is that he is gradually absorbing all your time, day and night, Clare. I'm not jealous of Horatio, my dear, but I don't believe in the old-fashioned idea that parents should sacrifice their comfort upon the altar of the nursery. You understand my position, do you not?"

"Gwendolen will be here to-day, Tom," I said, smiling at his disturbed face from across the table. "I hope that she'll take a fancy to the baby. At all events, she'll relieve the situation. When your wife's in the nursery, Tom, you'll have your cousin to talk to."

"Bah!" grumbled Tom, rising and placing a hand on the back of his chair, "Gwendolen's pretty and chic and up to date, but she's not in your class intellectually, my dear."

I smiled gratefully at Tom's compliment, but my mind was not at ease. Wasn't the presence of Gwendolen Van Voorhees in the house more likely to prove disastrous than satisfactory? When, however, Tom had insisted that his cousin's long-deferred visit to us be made at once, I could find no reasonable argument

to oppose to his wishes. From various points of view, Gwendolen's advent to the household appeared to be desirable. She was a charming girl, well read, widely traveled and a thoroughbred little *mondaine*. But I dreaded her arrival, despite the fact that I could not have put the vague fears that haunted me into specific words. I was beginning to realize what it means in this prosaic, unimaginative world to hide in one's bosom an uncanny secret. There had come to me, of late, moments when the inclination to tell Tom the whole truth about Horatio—or, rather, Jack—was almost irresistible. Perhaps my real reason for objecting to Gwendolen's presence was my fear, unacknowledged to myself, that I should be tempted eventually to tell her the amazing tale of Jack's ridiculous reincarnation. There were times, and they had constantly become more frequent, when the burden of my secret seemed greater than I could bear, when the longing to confess to somebody that the baby was a psychical freak of the most astounding kind burned hot within me. As I lingered over my coffee in the breakfast-room that morning, after Tom's departure, the immediate future looked black enough, and I could not see that the coming of Gwendolen gave it a lighter shade.

Nevertheless, I was really glad to welcome her later in the morning as I met her at the door of the drawing-room, and kissed her pretty, piquante mouth affectionately.

"I was awfully glad to come to you, Clare," she cried, vivaciously, as we mounted the stairs that I might show her to her rooms. "You know the song with the chorus, 'There's one New York, only one New York'? It's been running through my mind for two days."

"But I thought that you were wedded to Boston, Gwen," I remarked, my mind wandering for a moment as we passed the closed door of the nursery.

Presently we were seated cozily before an open fire in the guest chamber, while Gwendolen, dark, petite, smiling, appeared to me to be a most ornamental and fascinating addition to our little circle.

"Boston is amusing," she was saying, in her pleasantly emphatic way, "but it's so erratic, don't you know. My nerves always begin to ache after I've been there a few weeks. They are so fond of fads, Clare, those clever Bostonians! They take up everything, you know, and always go to extremes."

"It's American history now, is it not?" I asked.

"Yes," answered Gwen, gazing at the fire, musingly. "That's coming in again. But they're perfectly crazy about theosophy just at present. You'd be amazed, Clare, to discover how much I know about Nirvana and adepts and metempsychosis, and all that kind of thing. Several of my most intimate friends have become vegetarians and live mostly on baked beans. It's awfully funny—they take it all so seriously."

"And what do you really think of it, Gwen?" I asked, nervously.

"Think of what, of which, my dear? Of living on beans, do you mean?"

"No. Beans are only a side issue, or, to speak with Tom's scientific accuracy, a side dish. What do you think, for instance, of reincarnation?"

"I don't know what to think about it, Clare," she answered, reflectively, pushing her dainty little feet toward the fire and gazing into my face with earnest eyes. "Do you know, there are times when I really imagine that there's something in it! Of course, it's absurd in a way, but it does solve a great many problems, does it not? It conforms beautifully to the laws of evolution and the conservation of energy, and there are so many things that can't be explained by any other theory! But it always makes me shudder to think of it. Imagine, Clare, being born again in Turkey, for example. Wouldn't it be shocking?"

I laughed, rather hysterically.

"The whole subject is too silly for any use," I managed to say, in a superior kind of way. "It does very well for Boston, of course, but it will never have much of a run here in New York."

"What a narrow way of looking at it, Clare!" exclaimed Gwendolen, protestingly. "Of course, I'm not a theosophist, but I'm broad-minded enough to realize that what's true in Benares or Boston must be true in New York. If reincarnation is really going on in this world, I can't believe that any exception is made in favor of our Knickerbocker families."

Again I laughed aloud, nervously. It was pleasing to me to discover that Gwendolen had a mind open to startling truths, but I regretted the fact that I must henceforth constantly fight against the temptation to tell her my great secret. The imminence of my peril in this regard was illustrated at once, for she turned to me suddenly and asked, with great vivacity of manner:

"Where is the baby, Clare? Won't you let me see him at once? I came to visit him, you know; not you nor Tom. He's got such a lovely name! 'Horatio' is so fine and dignified! What do you call him for short, my dear?"

"I have not given him a nickname, Gwendolen," I answered, coldly. "If you wish to, we'll go to the nursery at once. As I told you in my letter, we've had difficulty in getting the baby a nurse. Just at present, I'm obliged to spend most of my time with him. But I gave you fair warning, you know."

"I'm so glad that I can have the run of the nursery," cried Gwendolen, gaily, springing to her feet. "I do so love really nice children, Clare. Is he a jolly baby? Will he take to me, do you think?"

I answered her question as we reached the door of the nursery: "I am sure I can't say, Gwen. Horatio is very eccentric and pronounced in his likes and dislikes. But if he goes to

you at once, follow my advice and don't toss him up and down violently. He says—that is, he doesn't like to be shaken after taken."

X

And thou, too—when on me fell thine eye,
What disclos'd thy cheek's deep-purple dye?
Tow'rd each other, like relations dear,
As an exile to his home draws near,

Wore we not then flying?

—Schiller.

I MUST acknowledge that the enthusiasm displayed by the baby when he caught sight of Gwendolen filled me with mingled astonishment and annoyance. He sat bolt upright in his crib, waved his hands joyously in the air, and crowed lustily. I realized that the poor little chap was laboring under a delusion, that he had mistaken Tom's fascinating cousin for a new nurse; but, even so, why should he act as if he were intoxicated with happiness? I could not check the conviction that Jack was making an exhibition of very bad taste by his warm reception of Gwendolen. That I was jealous of her was not true—that would have been absurd—but it was not pleasant to realize that the baby could rejoice openly in the advent of one who, as he believed at the moment, was to take my place in the nursery. Jack's horrible psychical disaster had greatly endeared him to me, and I could not help feeling hurt at his eagerness to go to a perfect stranger. There was something not altogether infantile in the way in which he threw his chubby little arms around Gwendolen's neck and tucked his smiling little face into her cheek, chuckling contentedly, while the girl laughed aloud.

"Isn't he just the sweetest little thing that ever lived!" cried Gwendolen, with spontaneous enthusiasm. "Did you see him jump right into my arms, Clare? Such a thing never happened to me before. Is he always so cordial to strangers?"

"As I told you, Gwendolen, Horatio goes to extremes in his likes and dis-

likes. He evidently approves of you." For the life of me, I could not prevent my voice from sounding cold and harsh. But the girl was too thoroughly interested in the baby to note the lack of cordiality in my tones.

"'Oo dear 'ittle angelic creature," she was murmuring to him, as she seated herself in the rocking-chair, with Jack cuddled in her arms. "Will 'oo always love 'oo cousin Gwen?"

Here was a kind of baby-talk that Jack seemed to like, for his every sound and movement expressed approval of Gwendolen's nonsensical endearments. But, I must admit, it annoyed me. Logically, I could not blame Gwendolen for displaying a sudden fondness for the baby. She had no way of knowing that she was holding my first husband on her lap. I was glad that she was ignorant of the fact, but, while my mind fully exonerated her, my heart protested against her fetching ways with the child. Jack as a baby had never appeared to such advantage. He smiled and laughed, winked his eyes, made funny little holes with his mouth, and waved his fists in the air in a kind of oratorical way that was irresistibly amusing.

"He's perfectly sweet!" cried Gwendolen, glancing at me with dancing eyes. "I don't think that I ever cared much for a baby before, Clare, but Horatio has cleared the first bunker beautifully. Is he always like this?"

I laughed aloud, nervously. I hadn't the courage to say anything uncomplimentary of the baby at that moment, not knowing how far I could trust Jack's self-control, and so I remarked, in a non-committal way:

"He's a very good baby, on the whole, my dear. Of course, he isn't to be blamed for protesting if things don't go just right with him."

"Of course 'oo aren't, 'oo lovely 'ittle caramel," murmured Gwendolen, her cheeks pressed against Jack's baby face. "I've always been so sorry for babies, Clare, because they

couldn't talk. It must be trying when a pin is sticking into you somewhere to have your gums rubbed by a misguided nurse, or to be rocked violently when the heat of the room has made your head ache."

The baby gave vent to a most astounding yell of delight, a very precocious exhibition of emotion that made Gwendolen laugh merrily. But his vivacity quite upset me. I feared, momentarily, that his enthusiasm would find speech an imperative necessity, and that Gwendolen would discover to her consternation that what was theory in Boston had become practice in New York. Thereupon I acted in a most tactless way. I bent down and removed Jack from Gwendolen's arms to mine.

"Put me back, or I'll denounce you," whispered the baby, in my ear. Then he began to howl in the most exaggerated infantile manner. I was annoyed to realize that my cheeks had flushed with anger and that a feeling of hot jealousy had swept over me. Gwendolen, sympathetic and impressionable, had noticed the outward manifestations of my inward turmoil and had hurried toward the door.

"I'll go back to my room, Clare," she said, as she passed me. "When you've put him to sleep, come to me. I want to tell you what I think of him. *Au revoir*, 'oo dear, sweet 'ittle marshmallow!"

Jack and I were alone in the nursery, and I seated myself wearily in the rocking-chair, holding the uneasy baby on my lap.

"What did you do that for, Clarissa?" he growled, kicking violently with his expressive legs. "I was in for the time of my life—this life, I mean—and you deliberately snatched me from that lovely girl's arms and practically drove her from the room. Do you not realize that you have been very cruel, my dear? Surely you can't be ignorant of the fact that I lead a very colorless life. Suddenly the tiresome humdrum of my existence is broken by a chance for a perfectly

harmless flirtation. Do you rejoice at your little baby's momentary relief from ennui? Not at all; you treat me with the most tyrannical harshness, grudging me the slightest change in the horrible monotony of this infernal nursery. What's that girl's name?"

"Gwendolen Van Voorhees," I murmured. "She's Tom's cousin."

"She called herself Cousin Gwen and expressed the hope that I might always love her," mused Jack, gazing with eyes too old for his face at his dimpled, restless fists. "I don't like Tom, Clarissa, but his cousin does him credit. I shall always love her. No, don't rock, my dear. I don't want to go to sleep. If you don't mind, Clarissa, I should like to lie very quiet and think about Gwendolen. Isn't it a beautiful name? I'm sorry my name's Horatio. Don't rock, not even a little bit. I'm very nervous, am I not? I'd give half a dozen slips and my silver rattle-box for a smoke, Clarissa. Do you think that a cigarette would hurt me?"

"You remember, Jack, that cocktails didn't agree with you," I argued, soothingly. "I'm sure that tobacco would be very bad for you."

"Of course you are," grumbled the baby, resuming his impatient gestures with his legs. "You think that everything worth having is bad for me, Clarissa. I suppose that you intend to cut me off entirely from Cousin Gwen?"

"Don't be unreasonable, Jack," I implored him. "Gwen can come here just as often as she cares to. But you must realize, Jack, that I have no confidence left in your veracity or discretion. You don't keep your promises to me and you seem to have no realization of the terrible results that might come from a discovery of your identity."

"Is this a curtain-lecture, Clarissa?" growled Jack. "I tell you flatly, my dear, that I can't stand much more. I've about reached the limit of my self-control. There's a deadly dullness to this kind of a life that is slowly

driving your sweet 'ittle baby-boy, Cousin Gwen's caramel and marshmallow, to desperation."

"But what can you do, Jack?" I asked, frightened by the peculiar tones in his voice. "My rôle is as hard to play as yours, is it not? We must both be brave and circumspect, my dear."

"Bah!" exclaimed the baby, rudely, clutching at my chin with his absurd little hands. "You may rock a little now, Clarissa, very gently. Perhaps I could get a nap if you'd stop scolding me for a few moments."

XI

Empty is the cradle; baby's gone!

—*Old Song.*

FROM one standpoint I have come close to the end of my narrative; from another, I am still at its beginning. But, with Tom's permission, I have placed the foregoing facts before the public in the hope that the statement may be read by somebody in Europe, Asia, Africa or America who is able to assist us in solving a hard problem. The New York newspapers have mingled fact and fiction, realism and romance, in the articles bearing upon what they call "The Great Minturn Mystery," in a manner most annoying to my husband and myself. The only really sympathetic and enlightening account of the awful affliction that has fallen on our erstwhile happy home was printed by a Boston journal whose editor is a Buddhist. But I'm getting too far ahead of my story.

Yet I have no more to relate that you, who keep abreast of the times, do not already know. You remember reading in your morning newspaper a few months ago of the strange disappearance from Mr. Thomas Minturn's town house of his baby, Horatio Minturn, and a guest, the well-known society favorite, Miss Gwendolen Van Voorhees. You have perused, I suppose, subsequent journalistic presentations of the case, telling how futile had been the search for our lost ones.

Tom, as the public knows, has offered enormous rewards for the slightest clue that should serve to throw even a glimmer of light on the most astonishing disappearance of modern times. We have employed the most famous detectives in all parts of the world in our futile efforts to find some trace of the fugitives—if such Jack and Gwendolen can be called. But, up to the present moment, we have learned nothing that can help us in any way in our weary quest. In desperation, and as a last resort, I have written and published this account of the events that led up to our great loss. When the editor of this magazine insisted that I should choose a title for my amazing presentment of our weird experience, a lump came into my throat and tears bedimmed my eyes. Had not Jack himself, with a most uncanny foresight, chosen the title of my unwilling deposition? "Clarissa's Troublesome Baby"! Alas, how little did I realize at the time of his suggestion how appropriate would be this caption to my melancholy tale!

"Where's Gwendolen?" Tom had asked of me at breakfast upon the morning of the fateful day that was to shatter for all time my second husband's materialistic tendency of thought. "In the nursery, as usual, I presume?"

"She'd rather play with the baby than eat or sleep, Tom," I answered, laughingly. "In the present dearth of nurse-maids, Gwendolen's enthusiasm for Horatio is most opportune."

Tom laughed as he lighted his after-breakfast cigar.

"Let's go up to the nursery, Clarissa, and bid them good morning. I haven't seen Horatio for forty-eight hours. I'm glad that Gwen likes him so well, but I really feel that I am entitled to a glimpse of the youngster now and again."

Thus did Tom and I gaily mount the stairway to our doom. We rushed, so to speak, with laughing faces, to the very edge of a precipice and toppled over, with a quip half spoken on our white lips.

As we entered the nursery, crying playfully to Gwendolen to abdicate the throne she had usurped, we were struck silent and motionless by the sudden discovery that the room was empty. Tom was, of course, less shocked than I by Jack's deserted nest. There came to me, as I stood there, cold and trembling, on the threshold of the nursery, the conviction that I was confronting the scene of another miracle, an environment within which I should never again be annoyed by psychical mysteries.

I was recalled to myself by Tom's voice saying:

"What do you suppose has become of them, my dear? Gwendolen! Horatio! Where are you?"

Ah, but the pathos of it all! Gwendolen! Horatio! Where are you? Were you wilfully, heartlessly selfish, indifferent, in your strange ecstasy, to the sorrow that you brought to others, or were you powerless in the grasp of fate, forced through psychical affinity to disappear thus weirdly from the sight of men?

You must see, dear reader, that what I have written cannot come to an end that will satisfy either your mind or your heart. I began with an exclamation point; I must conclude with an interrogation mark. And in that obligation I find that my tale resembles every human life. We come to earth with a cry, and we leave it with a question. So far as man is concerned, evolution has been merely a zigzag progress up from protoplasm to a problem.

And how has Tom withstood the unmaterialistic revelation that I have been forced to make to him and to the public? Has he been shaken in his faith in the teachings of Büchner, Haeckel and Herr Plätner? Of course, being a man, he is slow to admit that his nursery has vouchsafed to him more enlightenment than his library, but he has grown very gentle and sympathetic when I talk to him about the possibility that the dreams of the brooding East may be nearer the ultimate truth than the syllogisms of the practical West. You see, it was a con-

dition, not a theory, which confronted Tom that morning in our empty nursery.

Nevertheless, he tells me that he has just hired a young detective, who is said to have a genius for solving mysteries that his older colleagues have

abandoned as beyond their skill. Let me assure you, dear reader, that if Tom's latest employee gets on the track of Gwendolen Van Voorhees and little Horatio Minturn I shall see to it that the public be instantly informed of the fact.



BORGIA

OH, Love, why do you call to me to come
To this your feast of barren, Dead-Sea fruit?
Have I not eaten of your feasts before,
Amid the sound of dulcimer and lute?
Have I not heard your praises sung
By voices that, alas, have long been mute?

Long since in gardens perfumed and bedecked,
'Mid light and laughter, royal and divine,
The Borgias offered death in jeweled cups,
To those who drank of their rare-vintaged wine.
Ah, Love! last Borgia of a race accursed,
I know each velvet trickery of thine.

In every song there lurks a threat of tears,
In every flower there hides a sudden sting;
And he who laughs his fill when Borgia smiles,
Must pay the score in Borgia's reckoning.
Full great the price for such a passing joy—
The swan must die—that Love may hear him sing.

Ah, wily host, who opens lavish doors,
And offers me my wish and full desire!
I know full well the hand that becks me—strikes—
I know thee, Borgia—thief and subtle liar!
Yet will I sell my hard-won pallid peace
For this last cup of poison and of fire!

ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.



A KIND HEART

BRIGGS—What in the world did you make such a long speech for?
GRIGGS—Why, for the sake of the audience, of course.
“But I don’t see what benefit that was to them.”
“Weren’t you to speak next?”

THE CLOSED BOOK

IN Sylvia's cozy den are found
InnumEROus volumes, richly bound;
Editions rare, in prose and rhyme,
From Suckling's down to Dobson's time.

Smiling, she lets me con them all,
From quarto small to folio tall;
And yet, alas, how'er I plead,
The book of books I may not read!

The book of books!—the very one
That most I long to look upon.
Teach me, O Love, the winning art
To ope the volume of her heart!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



OTHERWISE

GOD knows!"—so does a recent college graduate.
Wisdom is good; science is better—but the prosecuting attorney can make both foolish.

Only fools are sensible enough to be thoroughly happy.
Some men are born wise; some acquire wisdom; most of us have wisdom thrust upon us by our wives.

Which disappears first, the honeymoon or *lingerie française*?

ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS.



THAT SOCIAL POLITENESS

GUEST—You must be very fond of your pianist; I have noticed him playing at every reception you have held this season.

DEAF BUT EXPERIENCED HOSTESS—Yes, I hire him regularly. Everybody tries to drown him out, and then I can manage to hear what they are saying.



THE moon and the stars were, of course, made for lovers, but incidentally they are quite useful to other people.

THE DISCOVERY OF CLAUDIA

By Marguerite Tracy

I HAD known Claudia since her childhood. As an old friend and comrade of her father, I stood almost too close to see the daily growth of the artist in her, until she began to pass through the painful stages of her actual student career. Her people were completely removed from artistic interests. They belonged to a long line of New England country squires who married lean women, lived bleakly and attended grim, unlovely meeting-houses. But her father was not ungenerous to Claudia's one ambition. He knew that a change was coming over the women of the younger generation, and that few of them any longer sat at home. He would have sent her to college, if she had wished it; but since she wished simply to study to become a painter, he intrusted Claudia to me.

There were years in which, I am free to confess, I derived little pleasure from this charge. I seem still to see the girl of that period standing beside her easel in a paint-smeared apron, grimly detaining a last hope. I particularly recall the reluctant sense of duty toward her which drove me again and again to her studio, in response to her pathetic reiteration, "You're the only one I know who knows anything."

Then she studied with Channer, at whose feet she sat with a patient persistence that ignored all rights save the inborn one which she felt in herself of bending every sinew—no matter whose—to the giant task that she had set before her. For Claudia kept her eyes on the stars. Channer, too, was patient. Looking back on those indescribably dreary years, there seems to have been nothing but patience in them; for it

was not until Claudia returned from her first trip abroad that she really began to show the slightest sign of an unusual talent. She left us a crude, plodding student, and she returned an artist. Channer went quite crazy over her, and I found myself curiously resenting his claim to her discovery. He seemed to think she had been sent him by the gods; that in my earlier efforts and responsibility I represented the merest instrument of fate.

Later, it was the privilege of a critic on one of the New York papers to discover her, and not long afterward she painted a portrait of a prominent society woman, and society claimed to have discovered her. Then she went abroad again, and they discovered her over there. Altogether, from that time on, I was content to retire to the comparative obscurity of a personal friend, and leave the matter of her discovery to her merest acquaintances, if not to the birds of the air. I was, besides this, rather ashamed that my early interest had been, in a manner, perfunctory; had seemed to lack that delightful confidence with which the enthusiasm of her later discoverers reproached me. Even Channer now contended that he had always known she had it in her. If by "it" he had meant the determination, I should have been with him; but to this day her student work rises before me, in memory, so barren of promise that I can only ascribe the change in her to a miracle.

And yet Claudia, the girl, remained unchanged, almost unhumanized. She represented, as of old, a monstrous ability for hard work, undiversified by any girlish dreams or weaknesses. Her

brush did great things, with a cold assurance to which nothing was impossible, and she accepted her honors as simply as she signed her name. She knew that she was ranked with the two or three foremost portrait painters in America; even with one who, finding America much too primitive a field, had now expatriated himself. But she was not painting for the critics. She had her own goal, and she carried conviction with her.

Then she failed.

It was not that her work retrograded. She worked too stubbornly for that. But she simply ceased to advance. She never spoke of it to me, or, I think, to anyone. Yet I saw that she felt she had now come to the place beyond which she could not see, through which not even her iron will could pilot her. She should have gone abroad again for a few years, to refresh herself in the only atmosphere where she was really at home; but, instead, she shut herself up in her studio.

One day when I came in and asked her to go with me to the Metropolitan for the afternoon, she astonished me by saying that she was sick of the old masters. She was working on the portrait of a young girl, I remember, putting finishing touches without the sitter. As she pulled the easel round for me to get a better light on the canvas, she said: "Do you know, it's remarkable how much this girl gets out of life?"

II

IT was at this period of suspense, when it was impossible to tell whether she had really reached the limit of her ability, or was to have a second miracle descend on her, that a weather-beaten youngster, with some sort of brevet rank and a strident personality, dropped among us, like one of his own projectiles, straight from the Philippines, with the startling intelligence that he had discovered Claudia.

As he had usurped my chair in the club window, I drew up another. Possibly he rose, when I joined the group

about him—I believe he did. But the tribute that he mechanically paid to my gray beard was successfully offset by the indescribable air which he wore of representing the Service. It struck me as rather interesting to learn, as I did at the moment, that I sat in the club window and paid taxes so that this young gentleman—and such as he—might go into outlawry for a couple of years and return to usurp my chair in the window and smoke my best cigars.

"Tell me something," he said, in his briskly commanding way, "about Claudia Dane. Curtis says that you know her personally. I never knew of anybody who painted the way she does. She's just a corker. I got a copy of a weekly supplement that had an illustrated article about her, and I showed it to some of the fellows who were doing illustrating, and they went wild about her. Out there we think she's the biggest yet. She can have us. She's not made much of yet, is she, here? The article spoke of her promise, and all that. But in Manila, I tell you, we've got her down fine. We sent for more copies of that supplement, and we have those portraits cut out and pinned up, and we say our prayers to 'em."

His face was lighted by the familiar Claudia Dane enthusiasm. Besides, his tone of primary proprietorship nettled me. "You don't happen to have discovered Sargent out there, do you?" I asked, "or Velasquez?"

"Oh, but," he said, with a sincerity that shamed me, "they're an old story, aren't they?"

I was driven to confess that I had come to consider Claudia Dane an old story.

He took a long and fully appreciative pull at my Cuban, and, as he let the smoke steal into the air in little breaths from his splendid chest, he watched it fade. "The fact is," he said, knocking the ash with the tip of a finger as *soigné* as a girl's, "there's something tremendous at the back of that woman's pictures. I've lain awake in the night and seen those faces, and, by George! they were trying to tell me

something. Have you noticed that when a sitter has at-all-fine eyes, she always paints her looking at you? Well, there's something in those eyes—”

“There's a lot of fine technique in them,” I admitted, drily.

He wagged his head at me. “There's more than that,” he declared, in a tone that made allowance for me. “You look closely at that ‘Portrait of Miss C—,’ and you'll get an idea of what I mean; though, for that matter, surrounded as you are here, I don't see how a fellow's going to have time to grasp her inner meanings in things like that. He's lucky if he gets so much as a glimpse. But I want to see some of the originals,” he asserted, finally. “I believe, if I can stand face to face with the picture itself, it's got to give up its secret. I'll have it out.”

“Did you ever see Van Dyck's portrait of a young gentleman with a dog?” I asked.

“No,” he admitted, cheerfully. “I don't pretend to know anything about the old chaps. But I can see when an artist's trying to tell me something, and I can usually get a notion of what he's talking about.”

“Well, you might practice on the Van Dyck,” I suggested. “That young gentleman will follow you around as much as you'll let him; lots more than Claudia's ladies, because he put even more technique into it than she does. Step up to the Metropolitan and have a look at him, and then drop in at the Society and commune with Claudia—she's got a full-face portrait there—and maybe you'll get some sleep.”

In fact, as I thought of this youngerster lying awake in the Philippines to interpret Claudia Dane, my patience reached its limit.

“That's the trouble with all you critics and connoisseurs,” he said, throwing one leg across his knee, as if it illustrated the facility with which he would, if it were left to him, dispose of us. “You get all balled up in a lot of shop talk about values and atmosphere and heaven knows what all, and

you completely lose sight of the painter's idea, or whether he had one. You're just like a trained musical critic who can tell at once whether Melba is in good voice or not, but to whom it would never occur to notice that her heart was breaking.”

“Do you mean to imply,” I interrupted, gravely, “that you think if Claudia Dane's heart were breaking, she would try to express the hidden tragedy of her life through the eyes of the women who look at you from her portraits? Is that your idea?”

He grew quite red, with all of us looking at him, and some of us smiling as we waited for what he would say. But he had not had an organization behind him a couple of years for nothing. He smiled back at us, and met our eyes with a merely momentary embarrassment. “I don't say what she's expressing,” he cried, severally, as it were, to each of us in turn, “but there's *something* which speaks out of those eyes that she paints looking right through you—” He hesitated. “You know the smile of Leonardo—”

“Oh, yes,” we hastened to assure him, and he as quickly reddened again and went on:

“Well, I've never seen a Leonardo, to know it, and the smile mightn't strike me if I did; but that's the sort of thing I see in Claudia Dane's portraits, and you can't convince me that it isn't there.”

I explained that we did not wish to convince him of anything except that the look in the eyes was a mere technical trick, which he could find in almost any good portrait that met one's eyes, and that Claudia would be the first to deny an ulterior meaning.

“I grant you that,” he admitted. “Of course she wouldn't give herself away.”

I confess, however, that his insistence, coupled with my own anxiety about Claudia, had taken hold of me enough to lead me, a few days later, through the galleries where her latest picture had been given the most prominent place. It was so hung that you saw it immediately on entering the front hall,

through the wide doorways of two successive rooms. It was a full-length portrait of a woman in evening dress, a rather thankless subject, as it happened, which she had handled in the only way possible. The face, as you approached near enough to see how little it had given to the painter, was only saved from entire meaninglessness by the way it was turned to look at you. The picture had evidently demanded properties, and a background of waltzing figures was intimated. It was purely and painfully decorative, and if the eyes that looked into yours held any hidden message from Claudia, I could only translate them as saying for her, "This is what I do when I am making the best of a bad job."

As I stood before the picture, reflecting on Claudia and wondering how soon the miracle that I fully expected for her would descend, her latest discoverer came up and stood at my elbow. He had evidently made a tour of the galleries, and had returned to the shrine to lay another wreath or light another taper before leaving.

"Well," I challenged him, "now that you've seen one of the originals, how do you feel about the message?" I tossed my thumb at the vapid lady in the ball dress. "Is it there?"

"Oh, it's there," he said, shaking his head in perplexity; "not as much as in some of the reproductions of her other pictures, but it's there. I think perhaps it's a little bit obscured because the picture is sort of fussy—don't you think so?—not simple, like her usual things."

I admitted that it was "sort of fussy." I thought he had hit the nail admirably. In fact, it occurred to me for a moment that if he should ever come really to know what he was talking about, his natural insight would make him talk well. I had an impulse to test him, and by way of sounding him in regard to his general attitude toward art, which I suspected to be barbaric, I asked him if he had looked up the Van Dyck and what he thought of him.

"Yes," he said; "I looked him up.

He's the right sort. I don't know much about the old chaps, but Van Dyck can paint faces to beat the band. It didn't haunt me, though. This seems more personal." He looked into my eyes with one of his quick flashes of ingenuousness. "I guess the old chaps are too big for me, just yet; don't you think so?"

I started to discuss this idea with him, but he cut me short by suddenly finding himself afire with a new one. I winced at the violent hold he laid on me.

"Listen," he cried, with his peculiar enthusiasm; "has she ever painted a portrait of herself?"

"No," I answered, at a loss; "I don't think she has—I know she hasn't. But why?"

"Because," he cried, releasing me in triumph, "when she paints a portrait of herself, that will give her away." He almost executed a dance on the academic staidness of the gallery floor. "If she ever paints a portrait of herself, I've got her sure." He laid hold on me again. "Don't you see it?" he cried. "She can't get away from me. It's got to come out, no matter how she tries to cover it. A portrait of herself—oh, what a fool I've been!"

I was tempted to agree with him, not only with regard to his past but his present state, and yet he was amusing enough to make me feel that perhaps he might be a diversion for Claudia, a sort of superior young cow-puncher, who might, for all I knew, give her a new note, a fresh point of view. He was sure to be entirely and startlingly original. On the spot I offered to take him to Claudia's studio, to let him read her message, if she had one for him, in the original. To my astonishment, he utterly refused to go.

"Me?" he said, flushing to the roots of his hair in an embarrassment such as I had never seen him show; "I'm not fit to run her elevator, let alone to go and talk to her. I'm awfully obliged to you, but I'd rather just trot along outside."

But I could see that the incomprehensible youngster was unboundedly

grateful to me. He followed me clear to my street car, stammering and embarrassed.

III

I SAW a great deal of him in the year that followed, for he had a fearless way of thrusting his young head among our old ones at the club. It seemed to be one of the ineradicable effects of his having been "out there." He patronized us, he bullied us, and, since he could not make himself one of us, he put the cart before the horse and made us one of him.

I was not sorry that he had decided to approach no nearer the custodian of his cherished mystery than her pictures brought him. As I came to know him better, I realized that the finely organized mechanician in Claudia, such a living pleasure to me, would be a bitter disappointment to him. She could hardly fail to disappoint anyone who came in contact with her on any ground but that of a common understanding of the most arid refinements of craft. She lived and had her being in questions and problems of tone and coloring and style, and when I came to think of it, I had never heard her laugh.

She came back to town in September, and I had a note from her almost as soon as she returned. She had spent the Summer abroad. She had seen many new things, and had a full appreciation of some old ones, but still she had nothing to give.

"I'm worked out," she said, wearily. "It was only a one-candle power, after all. What's the use of denying it?"

Then I told her of my faith in the second miracle. I talked steadily, to cover my own growing doubts. After all, she had done a great deal. She had come far. If she did nothing better than her past best work, she would still be among the first. That was a thing to be proud of—for a woman. But she knew that I had never considered her as a woman, and when some such word escaped me, she looked up. She gave me a very curious glance.

"Ah," she said, quietly, "then I have failed."

"I don't believe anything of the kind," I retorted. "I think that your real talent is resting, to show itself later on in some big thing. You will take a jump, as you did when you came home the first time."

"Meanwhile I must live on crusts," she said, bringing in the French studio slang with a smile that was too bitter for words. "I am simply sick of doing society women and men in starched shirt-fronts. I think I shall go out West and paint cows."

"Go out West and don't paint at all for one year," I suggested. "You don't need to."

She looked at me again, and for a fleeting moment I caught in her own eyes something that might have justified Van Armitage in his theory of a hidden grief. "A year?" she repeated, "without work? Don't you know that I should go mad?"

"You must have a change of some kind," I answered, with irritation. "You needn't wholly 'knock off' work, but at least get it off your mind. Ride, hunt, broaden your outlook—live; in fact, live like a savage."

"To live," she began, slowly, "one must have been trained for it a little. I never was trained to anything but paint. I know," she interrupted, as I started to speak, "I had it all my own way. Everything bent to me. And now, I have nothing. I'm like an admiral on a flag-ship. I—" She broke off with a quick motion, and leaving her chair, crossed the studio. "I've been painting something different; I want you to see it. I was overtaken with a desire to do the real thing."

She dragged forward a canvas, and I took it from her and put it on an easel. Then I retreated a short distance and looked at it. It was a portrait of herself.

At the moment when I realized this I had a sudden vision of Van Armitage, and remembered his prophetic grip on my arm. I felt myself looking at it through him. I heard Claudia

saying again: "I just wanted to have a go at the real thing."

And was this the real thing? I looked at the big canvas with the big idea coming out on it in rude chunks of color and lines of inspired charcoal, like a painted Rodin. From the canvas I looked at her.

"I'm trying to represent an idea," she said, drawing her eyebrows together. "In painting one's self, one is distracted by knowing such a lot of unnecessary things. I'm going to keep it very simple. I want only the idea." She took up her palette and brushes as she spoke, and I could not help noticing that the very touch of them gave her courage. She translated me instantly. "Oh, yes," she said, "they've grown to be a part of me—a sort of fungous growth. Sometimes they are monstrous to me, like some horror of the hospitals; but now that they seem to be falling off of themselves, I don't see just what I'll do without them." She began painting, as she spoke, in the cold, sure way that I had watched so often, through which, since I had been denied talent of my own, I had come to receive the deepest enjoyment of my life. That she had been terribly discouraged by her growing inner conviction that she had reached her limit—that for her, hereafter, the road must almost certainly lead down-hill—I had understood with a trouble scarcely less than hers. But her morbidness, which had personified the very instruments of her art into ghastly things, pointed to a state of mind that made me heartsick.

"And is that your 'idea'?" I asked, presently; "because if it is I'd rather see you put the thing in the fire than have you paint another stroke. If you have such ideas it's your business to get rid of them. They're—I don't know what to say—they're shameful."

My tone, even more than my words, brought the color to her face, but she worked on, and it was some moments before she spoke. Then, stepping back and passing her hand over her forehead with a gesture of unspeakable weariness, she said:

"The practice of an art up to a certain point ennobles and enriches a life more than anything else in the world. Beyond that point—beyond the point where life lives and grows in it, when it begins to live and grow on life, it becomes—my idea."

"You need a change," I repeated, conscious of how inadequate the bald reiteration would appear to her. "You are going through a perfectly natural physical reaction, and it rests with you whether you will work out of it into a healthy, normal view of things, and get back your old power with a fresh inspiration added to it, or whether you will go on growing morbid till your work becomes more of a pathological curiosity than an expression of fine art."

What I did not tell her, however, was the fear I had that it did not rest wholly with her. She had always, from my first memory of her, been so entirely one-sided that her chance of ever getting back to a normally balanced condition seemed less than that of almost any other brain-worker I had known. I blamed myself bitterly for not having seen it coming, for having urged her on when I should have held her back. But she had been so phenomenally strong! She had, as she admitted, dominated us all, and now we could do nothing for her.

"Then you don't like my portrait?" She tapped the edge of the stretcher with her mahlstick, reflectively.

"Like it!" I echoed, with passionate vehemence. I looked at the canvas on which she was planning, not, like Rodin, to express the soul of things unencumbered by detail of form, but to express an almost physical revolution from the study of form by imitating his manner. "Like it!" I repeated, "I hate it so that I could cut it into a thousand strips. And—" I hesitated for words, and my voice almost broke with the heart-ache that I was trying to control.

"Well?" she asked, with her ghostly smile.

I shook my head, and turned away to look for my hat. It was the strongest piece of painting, technically, that she had ever done.

IV

VAN ARMITAGE was at the club when I got back to it, and I found a certain relief in expressing to him in a general way my anxieties about Claudia. As I thought of it afterward, I realized that there was no one else to whom I could have expressed them at all. Even to those who admired her most, and who understood the value of her work as the boy beside me could not possibly understand it—in its relation to the work of her contemporaries—she stood simply for a certain quality in art. If I had said that she was breaking down, her admirers would have been very sorry; they would have said that we could not spare her. But they would have meant that we could not spare her work. As a personality apart from it they had never detached her.

Van Armitage turned over what I had said, tapping gently with his fingers on the chair arms.

"I've felt for a long time that she needed me," he said, finally, letting me into his astonishing thoughts as naively as if it were the most natural thing in the world for him to assume such a responsibility for Claudia, "but when you were so positive about her pictures, and convinced me that it was only an artist's trick exaggerated by my own imagination, I felt that I had—that I was—that she would laugh at me." He grew quite red, but he looked straight into my eyes. "I haven't known why it was," he added, lowering his voice as some one passed our chairs, "but I've been thinking of her for days. She's been haunting me."

"She's been painting a portrait of herself," I said, thoughtfully, as I looked at him. "I think possibly

you've seen more into our friend than the rest of us have. I'm not ready to admit that there really was anything in the pictures. It strikes me yet as the sheerest nonsense, but that portrait of hers that I've seen to-day has a message, and it's one I don't like."

"Will you take me to see her?" he asked.

"I'll be glad to," I answered, "but I don't feel that she's approachable. You couldn't do anything."

Van Armitage sat thinking. In his present eagerness to go to her, his previous reluctance seemed to have passed out of his mind entirely. "Do you think," he began, finally, "that I'd stand a better chance if you could get her to paint my portrait? You see, I'm catching at it as an excuse for thrusting myself upon her. I'll make it all right if I get a foothold."

The idea was so good that I wondered it had not come to me. But I had touched rather lightly on my anxieties, after all. "She's very morbid," I said, doubtfully.

"Oh," said Van Armitage, quickly, "I understand that."

He was watching me, eagerly, for my assent to his proposition. I remembered hearing that he had had charge of twelve hundred sick soldiers. I began to understand why.

"It will do no harm to try it," I said.

But it was all of a month before Claudia was ready for him. She was obliged to finish what she called a "bread-and-milk" portrait of a lady. "What is your young gentleman like?" she asked.

"Well, he's not 'bread and milk,'" I said. "But you'll have to make allowances for him in another way."

"Then I don't wish to paint him."

"Oh, but wait," I explained. "He's crazy about you."

"That's still worse," she declared. "I don't wish to be fawned over by a gushing young man."

"But he knows nothing about art."

"Then he may not be so bad. It's

the ones who think they know, and gush, that get on one's nerves."

"He came home from the Philippines about a year ago, filled with the idea that you had a message for him."

Claudia stopped short in her restless pacing about the studio, and looked at me blankly. "That I what?"

"Heaven knows!" I said, reassuringly. "He saw something in your pictures—in the eyes of your women that you painted, looking straight at one—"

"How did he see my pictures if, as you say, he was in the Philippines?" interrupted Claudia.

"He cut them out of an illustrated supplement. He has them still. He says his prayers to them."

Claudia continued to look at me as if I had mentioned some remarkable characteristic in a Fiji Islander. Then, more pensively, she looked at the floor. At last she glanced up again, briskly, and in a dry, business-like tone said:

"Bring him along, and I'll have a look at him."

Van Armitage, meanwhile, had decidedly weakened. He did not see what an artist like Claudia could want of him. He could not talk about art, and he was not paintable. He was a young gentleman of enthusiasms, and Claudia had let his enthusiasm cool on his hands. Still, he accompanied me to her studio, as he would have done anything else that I had asked of him.

Claudia was working. When had I not found her working? She had brought out her own portrait, which had been put aside for other things, and I saw at the first glance that in carrying it further she had not carried out her original idea. I felt that she had been influenced by my protests. But while she had refrained from expressing all of her morbidness, her own face and the face of the portrait had grown colder, more scornfully bitter. She was even more remote and unapproachable than I had feared she would be. She

gave you the impression of making you free of the studio, with the provision that you should not expect her to exert herself to entertain you. If Van Armitage felt the coolness of our reception, he did not let it disconcert him, but walked about the studio, in his cheerful way, commenting on what it held of interest for him. He stood a long while in silence before Claudia's portrait of herself, glancing occasionally from it to her, apparently with that anxiety for the resemblance which relatives and friends always show when they look at such a piece of work. Knowing that he had never seen a picture of her, and that her face was entirely new to him, I could not help wondering how far it differed from his preconception of it. I should have expected his interest in her to take entire precedence, but he seemed even more interested in the portrait. I wondered if he found his long-expected message expressed clearly there. He looked from Claudia's cold face to the colder face on the canvas, and then said:

"One, somehow, gets an impression of gray hair. The picture is much older than you are."

"I've painted it the age I feel," said Claudia.

She seemed ready to take him very simply, and she presently changed her mind about entertaining him, for she went on: "It was a piece of mental honesty. That is what I meant it to be. It tells the truth as entirely as it is permitted—" she glanced at me—"that is, on canvas. One is limited on canvas."

"There are things," I admitted, "that have no place on canvas."

"It's worse than that," she said, shaking her head at me. "The whole thing's a lie from start to finish."

As Van Armitage turned from the picture to fix her with his clear, boyish eyes, she went on: "We are creating an illusion of form and substance on a flat surface. We can't work all around a thing as a sculptor does. And the more illusion we create, and the more

truthfully we lie about it, the better we are satisfied with ourselves."

But Van Armitage turned back to the portrait with the air of one only momentarily diverted. "You've done yourself with a palette and brushes," he objected; "they seem to be growing there."

She went and stood beside him, looking at the picture. "How else should I have done it?" she asked. "You have to do something with hands in a picture, and the things were there. Besides, such individuality as I have in this world is that of a painter. What else would you have?"

"Why, a woman," said Van Armitage. "There's not a feminine line—not a feminine trait or feature in the thing. Now, your portraits of other women——"

"Are not portraits of me."

He glanced at me as she said this. "They had more of you in them than this has. This looks as if you cared only for work; as if you had no broader, deeper human feeling in you. Why—it's monstrous!" he finished, appealing to me.

I said nothing. I watched Claudia, but her face revealed nothing. She might, for all she showed, have been accustomed to having strange young gentlemen tell her such things every day. She simply seated herself in a deep chair and looked up at him as he stood before her, one hand nervously playing with his keys.

"You've got an utterly wrong conception of yourself," he said, more gently, looking down at her as if he were many, many years older and she were not famous at all. "If I knew how to paint I could show you in a minute, but I don't see how I can explain it to you without being crude."

I thought he had already been crude to rashness, but Claudia made no motion toward resenting it.

"Go on," she said. "This is very interesting."

"Well, if you want to know what I object to most, it's the look of being labeled all over with a purpose."

"You mean you don't like the palette and brushes? You'd like me to take them out?"

"I mean," he said, picking his words and frowning at the difficulty he had in finding them, "that you ought to put it in a soul."

"Oh, that's what you miss?"

"Yes, that's what I miss. You were born with one, weren't you? And you'll die with one, won't you? Well, you weren't born with these things, and you won't carry them into the next world with you, either. Then why put them on the canvas that in a certain way is to express you?"

It was all as simple to him as that two and two make four.

Claudia sat with her eyes fixed pensively on the floor at her feet, her hands clasping and unclasping the lions' heads that formed the knobs of the chair arms.

"Then my work counts for nothing?"

"For you, it counts only as it serves to express you," he answered, without hesitation. "Surely, you wouldn't expect me to put it the other way round and say that you ought to express your work?"

I had been so accustomed to Claudia's complete subjugation of her personality to her work that I felt it was rather foolish for him to keep harping on it, when he did not know her. His entire fearlessness of her kept me breathless.

"But if there is nothing in me but my work to express?" suggested Claudia. "You are just like everyone else who meets anyone he has preconceived ideas about. You wish me to conform to them, and I disappoint you by being myself."

Van Armitage's glance softened. "You could never do that," he said, quickly. "I purposely kept myself from having any preconceived ideas. I left the canvas absolutely blank, except—" he hesitated, and turned to her portrait. What he sought evidently was not there. "I saw something in your portraits that made me

wish to know you," he finished, simply.

Claudia did not answer him, but she rose and found herself a board on which was a sheet of gray pastel paper. She came back to her chair and made a quick outline in charcoal, modeling it with a few smudges of her thumb, and then applied herself to bringing a certain expression into the eyes and mouth.

Van Armitage and I stood at her side, looking over her shoulder. In a few moments she had put before us a rough head of herself, and in the eyes an expression of mute longing that I have never seen excelled.

"Is that what you were looking for?" she asked.

Something contemptuous in her tone made Van Armitage flush to the roots of his hair, but he met her eyes so steadily that hers fell before him.

"Yes," he said, "that's what I was looking for."

She brushed the face from the paper with a paint rag before we could save it, and gave a bitterly mocking laugh. "Take that chair over by the table," she said to him; "I'm going to paint you."

V

I LEFT them together, and from that time gave Van Armitage the entire field. He made but few reports on the progress either of his portrait or of his influence, but usually answered my inquiries with a vague, "We're getting along all right," which I took to mean that he really had no news to give me, or that as a matter of fact, and as I quickly suspected, Claudia showed a characteristic obstinacy about being influenced in any way. I judged it was to be a drawn battle between them, for since Van Armitage had not feared to invade her territory in their first encounter, he was not likely to retreat when he grew more assured of his footing in her studio.

I meant to drop in again after the portrait was pretty well along, but I

was called suddenly to London, and sailed without more than a scribbled note of farewell. I was away for some months, during which not a line reached me from either of them, and when I got back to New York in the early Spring the first newspaper I saw had an enthusiastic notice of her portrait, then on exhibition at the Society. I went to see it even before looking up Claudia.

The portrait was very much altered. With a great sense of relief and thankfulness I backed away from it to see it as a whole, to get the general effect. It was still treated in the broad way that in itself I had liked so much, with assurance and a splendid courage. Nothing in the composition had been changed; even the palette and brushes that Van Armitage had so bitterly resented were still there. But a mellowness had come over it, a depth and richness of tone for which I had been utterly unprepared. It was as if years had passed over it, and as I began to understand the means she had used to soften and humanize it without taking from the strength and breadth of the treatment, I settled down on a divan to study it in keen delight. And as I looked at her, Claudia looked down at me with grave eyes in which Van Armitage might have read his message. Even I could feel their eloquence, and I knew that, however skeptical I might have been of her other pictures, in this one she had told the truth about herself, just as Van Armitage had prophesied. It was this sincerity that made the picture great. It had become more than the technical expression of a splendid talent. It had become related to the beautiful things of life, and might hold its own among the imperishable things of art.

I lost all consciousness of time and my surroundings as I sat there looking at it, knowing fully that this hour was the one for which I had been waiting, for which I had hoped, of which I had almost despaired. I wondered if anyone had told her half how good it was. I recalled the news-

paper notice, and I imagined what Channer had said to her. I felt an impulse to rush off to her studio and tell her extravagantly, myself, at once. But I sat motionless, drinking deep of the fullest joy that I had ever known. And Claudia looked down at me, and I could see that she already understood.

And Van Armitage had done this! I wondered, with a jealous pain at my heart, why it had not been given to me to help her when she had needed it so much. It seemed to me that I would have laid down my life to give her what Van Armitage had given her. Channer and the others might say what they would—it was I who had made her. I remembered the years of patient waiting, the unspeakable dreariness and discouragement through which she had worked with no sympathy but mine, and I blamed myself bitterly that I had been faint-hearted oftener than she.

I had stood too near, in the early days of her student career, to see the coming artist in her, and afterward the artist had absorbed me so that I had failed to see the woman through the work. Our vivid common interest had gradually built a barrier between us, behind which I could see that she had grown more and more remote, until I had ceased to think of her except as an almost superhumanly detached capacity for painting. We were like people who have corresponded for years over a common hobby, but who have never met. To disassociate her from our long comradeship of craft, and to place her before my eyes simply as a woman, was what her portrait did as I sat looking at it, breathlessly letting the revelation dawn over me. I was, for the first time, face to face with Claudia—Claudia, who had slaved and suffered and obliterated herself that her canvases might live. The dreary years unrolled themselves before me, and I saw what they must have been to her. I understood what she had given of herself, with no one to help her, no one to stand between

her and the repeated discouragements when work was impossible and life all loneliness. I suddenly knew what she had meant when she had answered Van Armitage, "I have painted it the age I feel." What had made it possible? The grave eyes answered me only with my own questioning. Why had I never suspected them of the bitter blindness of tears? My heart thrilled strangely as I searched their depths, recognizing how much greater Claudia herself must be than the greatest thing that she would ever do. I had needed her work, it had been more to me than anything else in the world, it had given me my deepest joy to recognize the recovery of her old faith in herself and in the worth of achievement, yet these things became suddenly secondary.

It seemed to me that something in the eyes which she rested on me claimed me. I felt an overpowering impulse to go to her. I was suddenly aware of a message in those eyes. The face in the picture retreated from me, and I saw a girl in a paint-smeared apron, standing beside her easel, her hand resting on the unspeakably dreary sketch I had come to criticise, her eyes fixed on me. And I had shaken my head. Why had I not taken her in my arms? Success could not pay for those years, and that bitter loneliness. My heart went out to her, and her eyes met mine, dim with tenderness. I would go to her, indeed, but I lingered before the picture, reading and re-reading all that it held for me, thrilled with the thought that when I went to Claudia it would be no longer as her wearily exacting critic, but as a lover who is loved.

From this vision I awoke slowly, with infinite loss, to be confronted once more by the fact that it was Van Armitage who had given the magic touch—who had accomplished the miracle. With his dense ignorance of all things artistic, and of all that her work meant, he had found in it only the human appeal. It was to Claudia that he had come. With his

fearless faith in himself and his splendid enthusiasm, he had made a new heaven and a new earth for her, and I saw her accomplish immense things out of the faith and love he had given her. And as I thought of this, her eyes in the picture lingered on mine, and it seemed to me that they pitied me, out of her richer life.

Some one moved nearer me, on the divan, and I saw that it was Van Armitage. He had evidently been sitting near me for some minutes, and the greeting between us acknowledged our common absorption in the picture.

"I didn't mean to disturb you," he said, as we shook hands.

"I congratulate you," I answered. "This is your work."

He flushed and glanced away from me at the portrait. "Yes," he admitted, quietly, "it is my work, a little."

I was conscious of a new tone in him, even in such a slight speech. Van Armitage had grown. We sat together in silence for a few moments, looking at the picture through each other's consciousness. There was nothing about Claudia that he could say which the portrait did not say for him in better words, and I liked him for leaving it to the picture.

"You ought to be very happy," I said, at length. "It seems to me that short of doing such work one's self there can be no greater happiness than to know that one has contributed so much."

He turned his hat nervously in his hands. "You ought to be happy, then—you discovered her."

"I discovered the artist in her. You were the first to discover the woman herself. I left her in the depths. You accomplished the miracle. You made it possible for her to do this."

The muscles of his face twitched. He leaned forward, and, putting his elbows on his knees, took his chin in his hands. "Yes," he said, with an undisguisable tremor in his voice, "she couldn't have painted it that

way if—if she had not had me." He lifted his eyes to the picture and gazed on it a long time with a strange look of suffering which began to impress itself on me. It was this that had given him a new tone. Instinctively I went to his relief.

"It will all come right," I said, as if he had appealed to me.

He shook his head. "It's all over."

"All over?" I repeated, vaguely.

Van Armitage made a little motion, as if talking of it hurt him more than he had known it would, but he pulled himself together unflinchingly for the explanation to which he believed me entitled.

"I've just said good-bye to her," he went on. "I'm off to the Philippines. I misunderstood."

"The message?" I asked, gently.

"Oh, everything. I didn't realize how little a fellow like me could enter into a life like hers. I was only a change of air." He smiled with a bitterness which somehow did not accuse Claudia, for his eyes might have had tears in them when he looked at her, they were so mistily bright. I saw that she had been very tender with him. As she looked down she seemed to assure me of this. He had been inspiring. His great love had sweetened her life, and she would always remember it with a wealth of gratitude. But Van Armitage did not wish gratitude, at least not now, and he could hardly be expected to see that he had been too young. It surprised me, for I had come to believe that Van Armitage had been meant for her; his own confidence had reflected itself into a certainty.

"My poor boy!" I murmured. Then, after a moment, I added: "I had begun to hope that it had all come right: that she needed you; that you had understood her better than the rest of us."

"I think I did," he said. "Do you think she could have painted herself as she has without being loved? Do you remember how she was painting her portrait?—the coldness, the bitterness, the mockery? Do you see

them here?" He rose and held out his hand to me.

"I remember," I answered. "I saw it before you did, when it was infinitely worse."

He fixed me with eyes in which a question hesitated. I could not help thinking that a year ago he would have felt no hesitancy about approaching any subject under heaven. As I waited, he flushed again and came out with all of his old directness.

"Why have you never loved her?"

"I do."

He searched my face for a moment longer with a puzzled look, and then his glance returned to the portrait, and I felt that he was claiming the girl herself from the canvas, just as he had always detached her from her work. He was trying to take away a memory that would last him al-

ways. Then he turned away from the picture slowly, and his eyes filled.

"I'm glad that I helped her."

I looked after him pityingly, as his tall shoulders passed among the groups of people scattered through the rooms. But he was young, and I looked forward for him to the years when the bitterness would be all gone, and when the sight of a picture of Claudia would give him only the enviable recollection that he had returned her great talent to her when it was slipping from her; that through him she had received the magic touch.

Then I turned back to Claudia, filled with bewildered wonder that what I had read in the eyes of the picture had been repeated in his—the message that was not for Van Armitage had been for me!



PLEASANT WEATHER

THREE ways at once it rained and blew—

And yet 'twas pleasant weather;
The path was muddy—room for two.
Three ways at once it rained and blew;
Said Doris: "I don't care; do you?"

We laughed at storms together;
Three ways at once it rained and blew—
Yet, faith, 'twas pleasant weather!

RALPH E. GIBBS.



IN THE STUDIO

SHE—No, I shall never marry; I am wedded to my art.

HE—In that case you should get a divorce, for you have ample grounds.

SHE—What grounds, pray?

HE—Failure to provide.



IT is the man who stutters that has very little to say about ping-pong.

A LITTLE WORD

By Arthur Macy

LOVE is such a little word;
Oh, so very small;
Yet too large for one to bear it,
Large enough for two to share it,
Large enough for all.

Cupid, ever wise and knowing,
Found it in a garden growing,
Plucked it, joined it to a kiss,
Smiled upon it, named it Bliss.

O word of love! the gods above
Have set the crown of Venus o'er you,
With all the grace of Juno's race,
And all the charm that Psyche bore you.

Love is such a little word;
Lighter than a glance;
Yet 'twas never heard refusing
Those who know the art of using
Time and circumstance.
Simple swain and monarch mighty
Love the lisp of Aphrodite;
E'en the hermit in his cell
Loves it, though he dare not tell.

O word of love! the gods above
Have set the crown of Venus o'er you,
With all the grace of Juno's race,
And all the charm that Psyche bore you.

Love is such a little word,
Made of letters four;
Soft and tender, sweet and simple,
Telling of a lip or dimple—
Who would ask for more?
Who could make it any longer?
Who can make it any stronger?
All the gods know none more sweet;
Love is love—and love's complete!

O word of love! the gods above
Have set the crown of Venus o'er you,
With all the grace of Juno's race,
And all the charm that Psyche bore you.

HALF the world is unhappy because it can't be known, and the other half
is miserable because it can't help being known.

THE CROWNING OF THE KING

By Gilbert Parker, M. P.

TO those who have any philosophy, each age of life brings its own pleasures, its own compensations; if there is added "a healthful body, a mind at ease," its own happiness. Too many of us fight against the changes going on in our own tastes and desires and points of view. We think that not to feel as we once felt is disloyalty, or that the years are destroying in us our joy of living. When the spangling emotions of youth disappear, when a different bloom is upon the flower of life, we are apt to sorrow for "the good times that will come again no more," the colors and sounds and scenes that are fading into the irrevocable past. But, if we have real knowledge of life, we open wide our eyes to the new phases, the new experiences, the new years of middle or old age. What we appear to have lost in sprightly fervor is made up by a more even warmth; if we cannot race and row and sit up o' night, we can ride and shoot, and encourage those restful hours which youth flouts. Above all else, if we have the discerning eye and mind, we get to see more clearly the meaning of things. And it is the meaning of things with which these few words for THE SMART SET have to do.

At first thought and sight, the gorgeous display and ritual and ceremony of a coronation seem barbaric and wasteful—at variance with high purposes and simple worth and national endeavor. The American people, for instance, keep all their constitutional functions upon a base of commonplace simplicity; on the

ground, I suppose, that there is nothing grander than man clothed and in his right mind, representing the majesty of a people. I have seen such functions in the United States, and I confess they did not strike me as representing anything like majesty. Simplicity and grandeur of the noble and natural kind I have only seen among savage tribes. I have seen thousands of South Sea Islanders, brown, naked, simple, in a national celebration; but they observed the first principles of nature, and had regard to color, design, order, ritual, personal adornment and beauty. Imagine these same men in frock-coats and ugly "bags," with vast crowds defying every principle of that order and beauty which they insist on having in every other phase of life.

Why not be consistent? Why marshal armies in bright uniforms and give them convention and display and ritual and gold bullion and silver belts and plumes and gorgeous helmets, and prohibit color and design and the pleasure of sight and sense in relation to constitutional or national functions? Why have beautiful architecture and fine horses and carriages and exquisite linen and silver, and then regard the coronation of a king as a splendidly childish pageant? Why have noble parks, and landscape gardening, and splendid tombs to dead heroes and rulers, and statues and pictures and every circumstance of beauty and display in social and personal life, and in certain forms of municipal life, and deny it to the national? Are not the army and navy national and part of the

constitution? Should they not go in American yellow tweed and shagreen spectacles?

Not long ago I saw an article in a newspaper railing at ceremony—and the awful expense attached to it—much in the vein of the critic of Bethany who suggested that the box of ointment might be sold for three hundred pence, which could be given to the poor. This article was written in one of the most luxurious and beautiful buildings in the world! It wound up with a grandiloquent plea—in very expensive language—for simplicity. I wondered that the writer had not quoted the notable lines from "*Henry V.*":

And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st
more
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshipers?
What are thy rents? What are thy com-
ings in?

Oh, ceremony, show me but thy worth!

No, thou proud dream,
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose,
I am a king that found thee, and I know
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced title running fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world;
No, not all these, thrice gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave
Who, with a body filled and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful
bread.

And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil, and nights with
sleep,
Had the fore-hand and vantage of a king.

But Shakespeare did not mean to decry ceremony. *Henry* but contrasts his life, with the duties and high ceremony inevitable to position, with the lot of the peasant, who

Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,
And follows so the ever-running year,
With profitable labor, to his grave.

Let us get at the meaning of the thing. The coronation is the visible and formal assertion of inheritance and kingship in the presence of the people. It puts into concrete dem-

onstration the act which the law recognized when the king was sworn in before the Privy Council at the death of the previous sovereign. The formal coronation need never occur; but when it does occur it does so in all the circumstance of symbol and form which represents the development of the monarchical idea and its identification with the life of the whole people. It provides for the assembling together of all those national constituents of government and order; the Lords and the Commons, the Church, the Judicature, the Navy, the Army, "and all the people." It reasserts the monarchical principle. How much the application of the principle may differ within a century, how it may develop, is easily illustrated by the relations of three sovereigns of the last century with the Government and with the people. Under Queen Victoria the struggles between sovereign and ministers ceased—struggles with Parliament had been settled long before. George IV. and William IV. exercised—or sought to exercise—a rigorous control over the ministers of the day, which disappeared in the reign of Victoria. The fault was not all with the kings. There is such a thing as the tyranny of ministers, and the old jealous regard for the enlarged liberties of the House of Commons, won through revolution, became sometimes rigid and unreasonable. Both Crown and Government developed, became more flexible during the earlier days of Queen Victoria's reign, and, during the latter years, an ever-increasing democratic spirit pervaded the relations of Crown and people, and Crown and administration.

During the latter half of the century there was being prepared for the Government of Great Britain and the Empire beyond the seas a ruler who, exacting as he is regarding the circumstance of ceremony, has always shown a democratic spirit. Indeed, it is well known that as Prince of Wales his sympathies were with the more advanced party in the Kingdom rather than with the Tory element. Never

"interfering" in politics, his few political acts have always shown him a "progressive." He consistently supported the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill at a time when the Church party, and, therefore, the bulk of the Tory party, were opposed to it. He has always been alive to every advance in national development, whatever the form it has taken—science, mechanics, industry, commerce, education, art, literature, sport. His speeches have never been conventional or hidebound; his mind has always been level with the spirit of the time. He has never lagged behind. An unflagging industry, a prodigious curiosity, have kept him in touch with things. I do not think there is an Englishman living, saving, perhaps, the Duke of Devonshire, who more fully expresses British character and the British mind, in so far as it is concerned with national duty and national progress. But the King has a swifter mind and a shrewder sense, is a far more astute politician than the Duke of Devonshire. Urbane, strong, exacting, consistent, generous, simple, authoritative, he has as many qualities which go to make a successful constitutional sovereign as any man in the world. He has had the most thorough education; he had years of responsibility before he became king; he had the noblest example of sovereignty the modern world has known; and he has watched the growth of empire and national institutions unvexed by intrigue, unaffected by prejudices, untroubled by ambitions. The country has no other such counselor, not even excepting Lord Salisbury, whom his country admires, whatever their politics. And it is a thing of which our country may well be proud, and for which they may be thankful, that Lord Salisbury will represent the Government of this country before His Majesty at the time of its greatest Imperial development, and when the over-sea tributary nations have drawn closer to the centre; as Robert Cecil, his ancestor, represented his country before Elizabeth at the very beginning of our coloniza-

tion, and at the moment when Spain, as an empire, drew to a decline, and England reached out her hand for the banner of Imperial enterprise.

Nearly three centuries and a half have gone since then, and in this time we have made two empires. The greater portion of the first, which was represented by the American colonies, we lost. The second, by which we shifted Imperial power from France to our own shores, remains. We still keep our hold upon the American continent, though the United States set up a new power which, in influence, wealth and population, dominates the hemisphere. But Canada remains there—evidence of the ability of England to colonize and to rule. Since the conquest of Canada there have been added India, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, South Africa, and we have a host of smaller dependencies, the Straits Settlements, Hongkong, Ceylon, British New Guiana, Malta, the West Indies, Fiji, British Guiana, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Gibraltar, Aden, Wei-Hai-Wei, Newfoundland; territories varied, powerful, productive, a source of strength; some of them, like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, nations which may themselves become, one day, as the United States has become, Imperial powers. But, meanwhile, they are forming one great empire, which is called the British Empire.

The coronation of King Edward VII. will mean many things, but chief among them will be the demonstration of union, of sympathy, and of love of the over-sea dominions for the source of their national being, and their official share in that great function which formally proclaims Edward VII. King and Emperor of the home lands, and of the dependent and affiliated territories over which flies the red-white-and-blue.

The streets of London will present such a sight as has been never before presented therein; nor, indeed, in any city of the modern world. Subjects, princes and potentates of the

Orient, and their retinues and soldiers; black chiefs from Africa, and dusky soldiers of native races from every corner of the world, governed by the system of the British Army, and serving the world-wide interests of England, will fill the barracks of the metropolis, and make brilliant encampments upon its borders. The Jubilee of 1887, the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, of Queen Victoria, were brilliant and distinguished; but the coronation of King Edward bids fair, by reason of a vast quickening of the Imperial spirit throughout the King's dominions, to make such a demonstration as will be an object-lesson unforgettable by each citizen of the Empire, and a potent illustration for the rest of the world that England's power grows greater as the years go on. It is good to know, also, that this Empire, which was the first among the nations of the world to shake off feudalism and its worst corruptions, still remains the exemplar for Europe in all that concerns individual liberty and freedom of citizenship. No other nation but

one, and that is the United States, can point to a record so little sullied by oppression.

The commercial assets, the territorial assets of the nation are large, and the moral assets, deficient as they still must be in the slow march of civilization, are large by comparison with the rest of the world. It will be a great stock-taking, an inventory of magnitude, which will take place. London will make holiday; the whole land will be *en fête*; every country of the world will contribute its representatives to do honor to the crowning of the King. The splendid pageantry will bring home to the minds of all the noble traditions and valiant history of the land; but behind the form and the symbol, the sacred services in Westminster Abbey, and the Royal progress through the streets of the capital, there will be a significant understanding of great national duties, great national privileges, and of a responsibility growing larger every day, though the machinery of administration develops scarcely in proportion and facility with the increased burden.



"TWO OF THOSE"

FRENCH Canadians now form the bulk of the mill operatives in the manufacturing towns of New England, and dwellers in those towns are often amused at their well-meant efforts to use the English language before they have mastered all its intricacies.

A bystander at the railroad station at Biddeford, Maine, saw one of these French Canadians, with a long face and much crape on his hat, and surmising that he might be returning to Canada with the body of some deceased relative, sympathetically inquired if he had lost any of his family.

"Yaas," said the sorrowing one, "what you call dat feller when hees wife be dead?"

"Widower?" suggested the inquirer.

"Yaas," was the reply; "I be two of those; dis my secon' wife."



LOVE ALL!

SENTIMENTAL SPINSTER—And are you sure, dear, that your fiance answers all the needs of your soul?

MODERN GIRL—Oh, dear, yes; he's quite the *pong* to my *ping*.

SONG OF THE FOUR WORLDS

By Bliss Carman

IS it northward, little friend?
And she whispered, "What is there?"

There are people who are loyal to the glory of their past,
Who held by heart's tradition, and will hold it to the last;
 Who would not sell in shame
 The honor of their name,
Though the world were in the balance and a sword thereon were cast.

Oh, there the ice is breaking, the sap is running free,
A robin calls at twilight from a tall spruce tree,
 And the light canoes go down
 Past portage, camp and town,
By the rivers that make murmur in the lands along the sea.

And she said, "It is not there,
Though I love you, love you dear;
I cannot bind my little heart with loves of yester year."

II

Is it southward, little friend?
"Lover, what is there?"

There are men of many nations who were sick of strife and gain,
And only ask forgetfulness of all the old world's pain;
 There Life sets down her measure
 For Time to fill at leisure
With loveliness and plenty in the islands of the main.

Oh, there the palms are rustling, the oranges are bright;
In all the little harbor towns the coral streets are white,
 And the scarlet flowers fall
 By the creamy convent wall,
And the Southern Cross gets up from sea to steer the purple night.

And she said, "It is not there,
Though I love you, love you dear;
I should weary of the beauty that is changeless all the year."

III

Is it eastward, little friend?
And she whispered, "What is there?"

There are rivers good for healing, there are temples in the hills,
There men forsake desire and put by their earthly wills;
And there the old earth breeds
Her mystic mighty creeds
For the lifting of all burdens and the loosing of all ills.

Oh, the tents are in the valley where the shadows sleep at noon,
Where the pack-train halts at twilight and the spicy bales are strewn,
Where the long brown road goes by
To the cut against the sky,
And is lost within the circle of the silent, rosy moon.

And she said, "It is not there,
Though I love you, love you dear;
For my faith is warm and living, not unearthly, old and sere."

IV

Is it westward, little friend?
"Lover, what is there?"

There are men and women who are sovereigns of their fate,
Who look Despair between the eyes and know that they are great;
Who will not halt nor quail
On the eager endless trail,
Till Destiny makes way for them and Love unbars the gate.

Oh, there the purple lilies are blowing in the sun,
And the meadow larks are singing—a thousand, if there's one!
And the long blue hills arise
To the wondrous, dreamy skies,
For the twisted azure columns of the rain to rest upon.

And she said, "It is not there,
For I love you, love you dear.
Oh, shut the door on Sorrow, for the Four Great Worlds are here!"



THE EXACT WORDS

FOND MOTHER (*surprised on entering her drawing-room to find there her daughter*)—Did I not tell you to go to the nursery and ask God to forgive you for being so naughty?

ETHEL (*aged four*)—Why, yes, mamma; I have just come from there, and I spoke to God about it, and He said, "Oh, don't mention it, Miss Ethel; you are not so worse!"

AFTERNOON IN ARDEN

By James Branch Cabell

"THIS," said she, "is the Forest of Arden."

"Unquestionably," said I, with a mental reservation as to a glimpse of the golf links which this particular nook of the forest afforded, and a red-headed caddie in search of a lost ball. But beyond these things the sun was dying out in a riot of color, and its level rays fell kindly upon the gaunt pines that were thick about us, converting them into endless aisles of dusty, palpitating gold. There was a primeval peace about; only an evening wind stirred lazily above, and the leaves whispered drowsily to one another over the waters of what my companion said was a "brawling loch," though I had previously heard it reviled as a treacherous and vexatious hazard. Altogether, I had little doubt that we had reached the outskirts of Arden.

"And now," quoth she, seating herself on a fallen log, "what would you do if I were your very, very Rosalind?"

"Don't!" I cried, in horror. "It—it wouldn't be proper! Remember *Orlando*!"

"Oh!" said Rosalind.

"Yes," said I, stretching myself at her feet—which is supposed to be a picturesque attitude—"by the kindness of fate, he's golfing!"

Rosalind frowned, dubiously.

"It's a very ancient game," I reassured her. Then I bit a pine-needle in two and sighed. "Foolish fellow, when he might be—"

"Admiring nature," she suggested.

Just then an impudent breeze lifted a tendril of honey-colored hair lightly

and tossed it over a low, white brow—Rosalind's hair has a curious, coppery glow at the roots, a nameless color that I never observed anywhere else.

"Yes," said I; "nature."

"Then," queried she, after a pause, "who are you? And what do you in this forest?"

"You see," I explained, "there are other men in Arden—"

"Who—?" murmured Rosalind, softly.

"Exactly," said I.

"I suppose so," sighed she, with exemplary resignation.

"You were," I reminded her, "universally admired at your uncle's court—equally so in the forest. And while *Orlando* is the great love of your life, still—"

"Men are so foolish!" said Rosalind, irrelevantly.

"—it does not prevent you—"

"Me!" cried she, indignant.

"—from observing," I continued, firmly, "that *Le Beau* has remarkably expressive eyes, or from admiring *Amiens'* dancing, or from thinking of *Oliver* as a dear, reckless fellow, whom it is the duty of some good woman to rescue from perdition."

"Oh!" said she.

"You have such a tender heart," I suggested, "and suffering is abhorrent to your gentle nature."

"Jack," asked she, doubtfully, "do you think Shakespeare was aware of these finer and more subtle shades of my character?"

"Unquestionably," said I, "being a married man, he was; just as he also knew that a deal passed between *Desdemona* and *Cassio* which the Moor

never heard of; and that *Romeo* was not the only young man *Juliet* noticed at her début; and that *Cleopatra* had been—interested in *Cesar* before she died for love of *Antony*."

"I don't like cynicism, sir," said she; "and inasmuch as tobacco is not yet discovered—"

"It is clearly impossible that I am smoking," finished I; "quite true."

"I don't like cheap wit, either," said Rosalind. "You," she went on, with no apparent connection, "are a forester, with a good cross-bow and an unrequited attachment—for me. You groan and hang verses and things about on the trees."

"I don't write verses," said I.

"Oh!" said she.

"Any longer," I amended; "but I can groan." And I did so.

"It sounds rather like a fog-horn," said Rosalind, critically; "but I suppose it's the proper thing. Now," she continued, brightening, "you can pretend to have an unrequited attachment for me."

"I can't," said I.

"Can't?" echoed she. It has not been mentioned previously that Rosalind is pretty.

"Pretend," I added.

She preserved a discreet silence.

"Nor," I continued, with firmness, "am I a shambling, nameless, unshaven denizen of Arden. I will no longer conceal the secret of my identity. I am *Jacques*."

"Of course," said she, puzzled.

I spelt it.

"Oh!" said she, "I thought there were two syllables."

"You can't be *Jacques*," she continued; "you're too stout."

"I am well built," I admitted, modestly; "but proper pride demands that my name should appear on the program."

"But would *Jacques* be likely to—to—?"

"Who wouldn't be?" asked I. "*Jacques* was not impervious to temptation; and in the French version he married *Celia*."

"Minx!" said she.

"And how," queried Rosalind, presently, "came you to the Forest of Arden, good Jacques?"

I groaned once more. "It was a girl," said I, darkly.

"Of course," assented Rosalind, beaming as to the eyes. Then she went on, sympathetically: "Now, Jacques, you can tell me the whole story."

"Is it necessary?" asked I, with meaning.

"Surely," said she, with sudden interest in the structure of pine-cones; "I want to know all about *Jacques*." She said it very distinctly, in two syllables.

"It's an old story," I warned her, "perhaps the oldest of all old stories. It's the story of a man and a girl. It began with a chance meeting, and developed into a packet of old letters, which is the usual ending of this story."

Rosalind's brow protested mutely.

"Sometimes," I conceded, "it culminates in matrimony; but the ending is not necessarily tragic."

I dodged just in time, and the pinecone splashed noisily into the hazard.

"It happened," I continued, "that they were separated for a year's time before—before things had progressed to any extent. When they did progress, it was largely by letters. That is why this story ended in such a large package."

"Letters," Rosalind confided to one of the pines, "are so unsatisfactory. They mean so little."

"To the man," said I, firmly, "they meant a great deal. They brought him everything that he most wished for—comprehension, sympathy, and, at last, comfort and strength when they were sore needed. So the man, who was at first but half in earnest, announced to himself that he had made a discovery. 'I have found,' said he, 'the great white love that poets have dreamed of. I love this woman greatly, and she, I think, loves me. God has made us for each other, and by the aid of her love I will be pure and clean and worthy of her.' You have doubtless discovered by this time," I added, in explanation, "that the man was a fool."

"Don't!" said Rosalind.

"He discovered it himself in due time. For the girl liked him, and was amused by him. So she had added him to her collection of men—quite a large one, by the way—and was, I believe, rather proud of him. It was, she said, rather a rare variety, and much prized by collectors."

"Was she a very—very horrid girl?" asked Rosalind, gently.

"She was not exactly repulsive," said I, dreamily, and looking up into the sky.

There was a pause. Then some one in the distance—a forester, probably—called "Fore!" and Rosalind awoke from her reverie.

"Then?" said she.

"Then came *Orlando*. He was a nicely washed fellow, with a sufficiency of the medieval equivalents for bonds and motor-carriages and country-places. I forgot to say that the man was poor—also that the girl had a great deal of common sense and an aunt. And so the girl talked to the man in a common-sense fashion—and after that she was never at home."

"Never?" said Rosalind.

"Only once," said I. "They talked about the weather. So the man came to his senses."

"He did it very easily," said Rosalind, resentfully.

"The novelty of the thing attracted him," I pleaded. "So he said—in a perfectly sensible way—that he had known all along that it was only a dainty game they were playing—a game in which there were no stakes. That was a lie. He had put his whole soul into the game, playing as he knew for his life's happiness; and the verses, had they been worthy of the love that caused them to be written, would have been among the great songs of the world. But while the man knew at last that he was a fool, he had a man-like reluctance to admitting it. So he laughed—and lied—and broke away, hurt, but still laughing."

"You hadn't mentioned any verses before," said Rosalind.

"I told you he was a fool," said I.

"And, after all, that's the entire story."

Then I spent several minutes in wondering what would happen next; during this time I lost none of my interest in the sky.

"The first time that the girl was not at home," Rosalind observed, impersonally, "the man had on a tan coat and a brown derby. He put on his gloves as he walked down the street. Then the girl wrote to him—a strangely sincere letter—and tore it up."

"Historical research," I murmured, "surely affords no warrant for such attire."

"You see," continued Rosalind, oblivious to interruption, "I know all about the girl—which is much more than you do."

"That," I conceded, "is more than probable."

"When she knew that she was to see the man again—Did you ever feel as if something had lifted you suddenly hundreds of feet above rainy days and cold mutton for luncheon, and the possibility of other girls wearing black evening dresses, when you wanted yours to be the only one in the room? That is the way she felt, when she saw the postmark on his letter. At first, she realized nothing beyond the fact that he was near her, and that she would see him. She didn't even plan what she would wear, or what she would say to him. In an undefined way, she was happier than she had ever been since—until the doubts and fears and knowledge that give children and fools a wide berth came to her—and she saw it all against her will, and thought it all out, and came to a conclusion."

I sat up. There was really nothing of interest occurring overhead.

"They had played at loving—lightly, it is true, but they had gone so far that they could not go backward—only forward, or not at all. She had known all along that the man was but half in earnest—believe me, a girl always knows that, even though she may not admit it to herself—and she had known that a love-affair meant to him material for a sonnet or so, and a well-turned letter or two, and nothing more.

He was coming to her, pleased, interested and a little eager—in love with the idea of loving her—willing to meet her half-way, and very willing to follow her the rest of the way—if she could draw him. What was she to do? Could she accept his gracefully insulting semblance of a love she knew he did not feel? Could they see each other a dozen times, swearing not to mention the possibility of loving—so that she might have a chance to impress him with her blondined hair—it is, you know—and small talk? And—and besides—”

“It is the duty of every young woman to consider what she owes to her family,” said I, absent-mindedly. Rosalind’s family is an aunt. The aunt is a personage; she is also a philanthropist, with wide experience as a patroness, and extreme views as to eligibles.

Rosalind flushed somewhat. “And so,” said she, “she exercised her common sense, and was nervous, and said foolish things about new plays, and the probability of rain—to keep from saying still more foolish things about herself; and refused to talk personalities; and let him go, with the knowledge that he would not come back. Then she went to her room, and had a good cry. Now,” she added, after a pause, “you understand.”

“I do not,” said I, very firmly.

“A woman would,” she murmured.

This being a statement I was not prepared to contest, I waved it aside. “And so,” said I, “they laughed; and agreed it was a boy-and-girl affair; and were friends.”

“It was the best thing—” said she.

“Yes,” I assented, “for *Orlando*. ”

“It was the most sensible thing.”

“Eminently.”

This seemed to exhaust the subject. I lay down once more among the pine-needles.

“And that,” said Rosalind, “was the reason that *Jacques* came to Arden?”

“Yes,” said I.

“And found it——?”

“Shall we say—Hades?”

“Oh!” murmured she, scandalized.

“It happened,” I continued, “that he was cursed with a good memory. And the zest was gone from his little successes and failures, now there was no one to share them; and nothing seemed to matter very much. And it was dreary to live among memories of the past, and his life was somewhat vexed with disapproval of his own folly and hunger for a woman who was out of his reach.”

“And *Rosalind*—I mean the girl—?”

“She married *Orlando*,” said I; “and they lived happily ever afterward.”

Rosalind pondered over this for a moment.

“Do you know—?” said she.

“Yes?” said I.

“I think—”

“Yes?”

Rosalind sighed, wearily; but about this time a dimple occurred in her cheek.

“—that *Rosalind* must have thought the play very badly named.”

“‘As You Like It?’” I queried, obtusely.

“Yes—it wasn’t—for her.”

It is unwholesome to lie on the ground after sunset.

“We were very foolish,” said Rosalind.

“I was,” I amended, with proper contrition.

“And my aunt—”

“Our aunt.”

“—will be furious; but I don’t care. And I am *not* a wilful, head-strong, infatuated girl. I long ago settled on the sensible and proper course for me to pursue—you were really insufferably complacent, sir—and decided only after mature and careful deliberation not to follow it. And that,” said Rosalind, “is what I call being truly sensible.”

“And if it isn’t sensible,” said I, “it’s something much better.”



RICCARDO OF THE GRAY EYES

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

WHEN Tennent's eyes first rested on the Grand Canal, fate had seen to it that Antonio was nearest to him in the line of waiting gondoliers, and about the old man's courteous and softly spoken offer of his services there was an indescribable something of persuasion which outweighed all the clamor of his vociferous fellows. Tennent had engaged him, and had noted appreciatively the fact that he proffered no disturbing information concerning the names of bridges and *palazzi* as the gondola slid up the Grand Canal. For in Venice details should be matters of gradual assimilation. Mingled with one's first glimpse of her, the human voice, save at the distance that lends enchantment, is an abomination. Antonio was better paid that evening for reticence than many another gondolier has been for loquacity.

On the following morning, when Tennent flung open the shutters of his lodgings on the Riva degli Schiavoni, a gondola lay moored beside the landing steps of the Ponte della Pietà, immediately below. He had turned back to his dressing-table, when, with a soft thud, a great golden orange fell on the carpet at his feet, and, going back to the window to see whence this unexpected tribute had come, he discovered Antonio on the steps of the bridge, almost within touching distance.

"*Salute, signore!*" said the old gondolier. "*La aspetto. È una così bella mattina!*"

That settled the question, once and for all. Gabriel forthwith adopted Antonio, as confidently as Antonio had adopted Gabriel, and thereafter, during

the American's annual month in Venice, never so much as a *soldo* passed from his hands into those of another gondolier, or into Antonio's from those of another *cliente*. Antonio, duly forewarned of Tennent's arrival, met him, all smiles, at the *stazione*, and Antonio, perilously near to tears, saw him depart at his month's end. And during the long, warm days, when the gondola rocked to and from the Lido or stole silently over the broad waters of the Laguna Viva, as well as during the breathless, blue nights on the Grand Canal, there sprang up between these two that most subtle sympathy which rarely knows the need of speech. When, after a hard Winter, an impatient landlord had been about to turn the gondolier and his wife out of their humble quarters, it was Gabriel Tennent who arrived in Venice in time to hear the story and pay the paltry score. When Tennent, returning on foot from a late supper at the Grand Hotel, had been attacked by a band of loungers in the narrow and dimly lighted *calle* back of the Piazza, it was Antonio who sprang, as if by magic, from nowhere, and put the assailants to flight. Not then, nor later, did Gabriel know how often he was followed at night through the streets of the city by the gondolier whose home he had saved by means of one of his carelessly scattered hundred- *lire* notes. On each side there was cause for gratitude, and on each existed, as well, a generous loyalty and a genuine affection.

Antonio was at his customary post under an arch of the Libreria Vecchia this Spring afternoon when Tennent swung briskly into the Piazzetta and

hailed him with a wave of the hand. As he came forward Tennent noted with a smile the fresh straw hat, the new trousers of a wonderful and surprising green, and the crimson silk handkerchief knotted about the swarthy throat. The gondolier was in gala dress, for this evening was one to which Costanza and he looked forward throughout the entire year. At first, inviting Tennent to dine with them had been an experiment so audacious that, merely at Antonio's proposal of it, Costanza had raised her wrinkled hands in consternation. But Antonio knew his friend. Gabriel had not only accepted, but had eaten the simple meal with unmistakable satisfaction, and had won the heart of the little granddaughter Maria with sweetmeats and a miraculous doll that opened and closed its eyes. And the package in the gondola—what did that contain, *O Santa Vergine!* but a carved meerschaum pipe for Antonio, and a warm red shawl for *la buona vecchia!* So the annual dinner in the Rio di San Polo had come to be an institution, and, not ten minutes before Tennent emerged upon the Piazzetta, he had refused the invitation of a Spanish prince to join him at the Bauer Grünwald, in order that he might keep his engagement to eat Costanza's *gnocco* and *bollita*.

She was waiting for them at the doorway of the scrupulously clean little apartment on the top floor, her blue eyes gleaming with expectation; and Tennent, kissing her on both brown cheeks, set them glowing with pleased embarrassment. But it was good to see the *signore* again, after so long a time! It had seemed longer than usual this year, for the Spring was so late in coming. Even now the nights were chill on the canals. But she knew from Antonio that the *signore* nevertheless spent each evening in the gondola. For Antonio it was nothing, that! He was Venetian-born. But *gli stranieri*—who could say what risks they did not run? Therefore Costanza had knitted Tennent a woolen comforter, and this he must wear, else

—*Dio benedetto!*—there was no saying what *disgrazia* might not ensue!

She thrust her offering into Gabriel's hands, and had vanished into the kitchen before he could speak his thanks.

"And Maria?" asked Tennent, placing the comforter about his neck, as he turned to Antonio. "*Dov'è la nipotina?*"

A sudden cloud crossed the gondolier's face at the question. "*Ma, signore,*" he stammered, glancing down at his knotted hands. "She is well, she is always here—but—"

As he looked up again Tennent saw that the old man's lips were trembling. "Antonio," he said, "Antonio! What is it? Is anything wrong? Tell me—can I help you?"

"*Badi, signore, eccola!*" whispered Antonio. "I will tell you later—on the canal."

Maria came through the curtained doorway as he spoke, her hand outstretched to meet Tennent's. She was seventeen—already a woman, as he told himself, in sudden surprise at the new maturity of her beauty. The past year had been for Maria the stepping-stone from girlhood. Tennent had left her a child, slender almost to angularity, but with an unmistakable prophecy in her deep eyes, her delicate complexion and her golden-red hair of what he now saw before him—a prophecy come wonderfully true. As Gabriel looked into her eyes, his thought involuntarily sped away to those of the *Assunta*, shining now through the gathering gloom of the deserted Academy. In both lay the same joy of living, the same wide wonder of revelation, the same strange, indefinable sadness. Almost before Tennent, the lover of beauty, had time to realize that it was present here in an almost startling degree, Tennent, the man of the world, had added: "But there is only one thing can make a woman look like that. I hope he is a good man."

"We are so glad to see you, *signore*," said Maria. "For a month the grandmother has talked of nothing but your coming."

"I am as glad to be here as you can be to have me, Maria," he answered. "Coming to Venice is like coming home. And are we to have *risotto*? You know no one makes it like the grandmother. I have been thinking about it ever since I left Ferrara."

"*Ma senza dubbio!*" laughed the girl. "We know your tastes." She counted the dishes off on her slender fingers. "*Zuppa, frittata, bollita, gnocco, insalata—e il suo risotto! E Breganze. Sempre lo stesso, signore!*"

"*Brava!*" said Tennent. "It couldn't be better. I wonder if you have a rosary, Maria?" He drew from his pocket a string of carved ivory beads with a silver crucifix attached. "This one comes from Rome," he added, "and with my own eyes I saw it blessed by the Holy Father."

"*Signore!*" cried Maria. And Tennent was amply repaid.

What a dinner it was, to be sure! Antonio did it full justice, as did Tennent. Even Maria, in blissful ignorance of that creed of her social superiors which holds good appetite to be bad form, caused *zuppa* and *risotto* to disappear with incredible celerity. Only Costanza, fearful lest all should not go well, had no palate for her own simple delicacies, but sat, wide-eyed and anxious, watching each mouthful which Gabriel took, as if fearful that it would call down reproach on her head. Afterward, there were long black and curiously crinkled cigars, with quill mouthpieces, for the men, though Antonio preferred to light his *meerschaum*, Tennent's gift of six years before, now almost black from constant use. And Tennent told them anew of his travels, stumbling a little now and again over his Italian, and being corrected saucily by Maria, while Costanza shot indignant glances at her presumptuous granddaughter, and made little clicking sounds with her thin lips. Finally—*Buon Dio!* Tennent had almost forgotten!—there was a whole tea-set of blue china for Costanza, below in the gondola, and for Antonio a new pipe to replace the much-used old one. So these were

brought up and made much of; and it was a *meraviglia*, said Costanza, that things so beautiful had not been taken by the thieves. Surely the *signore* was mad to have left them in the gondola!

So, the farewells were said, and Gabriel kissed Costanza again, and made her brown cheeks blush, and would have kissed pretty Maria as well—*il biricchino!*—but that she drew back, and said no, that now she was no longer a child.

"Then there is some one else, Maria," he said, laughing, "some other sweetheart, whom I must kill!"

The instant after he was sorry for the words, for Maria's eyes went from Antonio's to Costanza's and back to his, like those of a startled pigeon, and she drew her breath so sharply that it seemed, almost, to be a sob. The hurt, and the strange, sudden apprehension of her look dwelt in Tennent's memory, even after the gondola had crept noiselessly round the turn of the Rio di San Polo, out into the blue-black bosom of the Grand Canal.

The chill that had lain on the Venetian nights since Gabriel Tennent's arrival had given way that evening to the first warm, languorous breath of coming Summer, and, as he lay back on the cushions, listening to the ripple of the water at the gondola's prow, and the rhythmic lisp of Antonio's oar, the night-air came, puff on puff, across his cheeks with a touch as soft as the caress of a woman's fingers. Far to the left, an end of the Ponte di Rialto gleamed gray-white in the moonlight. To the right, the lanterns on a nearing barge pricked yellow dimples in the water, and across the canal came the sound of guitars and mandolins and a man's voice, singing a verse of "*Fran-gesa.*"

Suddenly, the chorus swelled, and then the barge and half a hundred attendant gondolas swept slowly out of the shadow cast by the Palazzo Persico, into the full light of the moon. Antonio swung the gondola about in a wide curve, so as to approach the little flotilla, against which it presently

nestled. Tennent, turning in his seat, gave himself up, with a sigh of satisfaction, to enjoyment of a scene that was always deliciously new to him by reason of its very familiarity.

For a few moments barge and gondolas floated on together. The singer had finished his song, and was now stepping adroitly from boat to boat to the accompaniment of hissing *grazie* and the clink of copper. Another had taken his place on the barge. Tennent, as he searched his pockets for a coin, observed the latter inattentively. The light of the barge lanterns, intensifying the shadows under the new singer's brows and cheek-bones, lent him an appearance of brooding sullenness, which did not, however, conceal the fact that he was handsome, with that almost ominous masculine beauty of the Italian which hints at unrestrained passions. Preparatory to singing, he glanced about him haughtily at his floating audience, and, as guitars and mandolins played the introductory chords, he announced the familiar title of the song that had been requested:

"Si domanda l'Addio a Napoli."

His indolent drawl told his Southern birth, and, when he had spoken, he raised his face into the full light of the lanterns, and under his dark brows his eyes showed themselves a curious clear gray.

"You're a good-looking animal, my friend," said Gabriel, inwardly, "but I'd warrant a *napoleone* to a *centesimo* that you're a bred-in-the-bone ruffian."

He was surprised to notice that no sooner had the song been announced than Antonio pushed his gondola clear of the flotilla, but he made no objection. Antonio did as seemed best to him, those evenings on the Grand Canal—music or silence, motion or rest, moonlight or shadow, it was all the same to Gabriel Tennent. Venice at night seems to be more than merely Venice, supremely bewitching, howsoever one takes her. Moreover, the old gondolier was making for the Palazzo Cavallini, and Tennent knew what that meant. Antonio wished to talk, and

Antonio was not like lesser men. When he wished to talk, it was because he had something to say. As the gondola glided up beside the palace, and slowly stopped beside the green, water-lapped steps, he came forward along the *poppa*, and, crouching at Tennent's elbow, lighted his new pipe. "*Una bellissima pipa, signore,*" he said. "*La ringrazio mille volte.*"

Tennent made no reply. Experience of Antonio had taught him many things, not the least useful being that, on an occasion such as this, a word of interruption was enough to check the old man's intended confidence and send him back in silence to his oar.

"*Ecco,*" resumed Antonio, presently. "The *signore* was speaking to me of Maria, is it not true? *Ebbene*, I am an old man, and perhaps I do not understand how things are done, these days. But my heart is very heavy for her, for I fear that all is not well. The *signore* has seen him yonder. That was he who was about to sing—Riccardo—Riccardo dagli Occhi Grigi, as he is called on the Piazzetta. He came from Naples a month ago, to sing on the Canal, and where the little one met him I know not, but this is certain—that she loves him. We would have spoken against it, the grandmother and I, but when an Italian has gray eyes, *signore*, there is nothing to be said. That I know, because I have seen them before now. At night he sings, as the *signore* has seen. By day, he takes her in a gondola. And sometimes, *a casa*, she laughs when there is no reason to laugh, *signore*, and again, she weeps when there is no cause for tears. And so I fear, *signore*, and yet I know not why."

There was a long pause. From the gaily illuminated barge across the water came the superb baritone of Riccardo of the Gray Eyes, singing the final phrase of his song:

*"Oh, addio, mia bella Napoli!
Addio—addio—
Addio, care memorie
Del tempo, ah! che fuggi!"*

And, somehow, at the sound, Tennent, too, was afraid and yet knew not why.

It was two days later that he met the singer. He was lounging with that instinctive grace which in Italians is so constant as to savor of intention, on the steps of San Rocco, a spot sufficiently near to the Rio di San Polo to suggest a purpose in his presence, and that purpose the coming of Maria. Tennent recognized him immediately by his eyes, and, on the spur of the moment, realized that this unforeseen opportunity made an unquestionable demand upon him.

"*Buon giorno, amico,*" he said. "Can I have a word with you? There is a wine-shop yonder."

The Neapolitan looked up at him, narrowing his eyes, and raising his hand thoughtfully to his mustache.

"*Perbacco!*" he drawled, "I do not see why not. Except—" he glanced over the little square before them, doubtfully, consulted a fat silver watch, as if in unwitting confirmation of Tennent's suspicions, and then added: "Yes, I shall have time. Is it important?"

"Very," said Tennent, laconically, and, turning, led the way to the little *bettola*. Riccardo followed him, his hands in his pockets, whistling one of his songs. Another would, perhaps, have been surprised at the unusual request, but to your Neapolitan all things are possible and a majority probable. The two men seated themselves at a little table inside the doorway—to avoid the sun, as Gabriel said to his companion, adding, mentally, "and Maria," and when the *padrone* had set the vermouth, two glasses and a *caraffa* of water before them, the American, with characteristic directness, came abruptly to the point.

"Are you going to marry Maria?"

Riccardo of the Gray Eyes was rolling a cigarette, and for a fraction of a second the paper trembled between his fingers, and a little of the tobacco escaped and fell on the marble-topped table. Then he looked up with a shrug, and met his companion's eye in insolent confidence.

"Why should I?" he asked.

"She loves you," answered Tennent.

"*Per Cristo!*" laughed Riccardo, slipping his cigarette between his even white teeth. "All the less reason why I should marry her. When a woman loves, there is no need for marriage. It is only when she does not that one has resort to extremes."

Tennent threw back his head, and gazed at the dingy low ceiling for a full minute without replying. It is not always even your born general who will admit to himself at the start of the battle that his premeditated plan of attack will inevitably bring defeat, and who will forthwith change his tactics. But then Gabriel was a diplomatist, and a diplomatist is oftentimes a more dangerous antagonist than a born general.

"You are right," he said, presently. "I had not thought of that. But suppose I were to tell you that you have a rival?"

"I should say, with regret, that the *signore* lied," observed Riccardo, politely.

"Don't mistake me," answered Tennent. "I did not say a successful rival. I said a rival, *semplicemente*."

"Oh, that is possible—even many rivals. The game is better worth playing for that."

"And suppose," continued Tennent, fingering his glass, "that this rival realized that so long as you were present he could hope to do nothing. Once I was told that, when an Italian has gray eyes, there is nothing to be said. That I believe. With those eyes of yours, with your singing on the canal, you have made many conquests, *amico*. One does not need to be told that. You are a fine fellow, Riccardo dagli Occhi Grigi!"

A thin wreath of cigarette smoke trailed slowly up Riccardo's cheek.

"Yes," he said, slowly; "yes, I am Riccardo dagli Occhi Grigi—and there is Maria—and there is my rival—and, of course, you are the rival, *signore!* Mind you, I do not say the successful rival—I say the rival, *semplicemente*."

On Tennent's lips there hovered a momentary smile, which seemed to

admit, while it strove to ignore, the other's insinuation.

"And suppose," he went on, "that this rival were rich—that he could offer you what would tempt you to leave Venice—at once and for always. Suppose he could offer you more than you could earn in all the season on the Grand Canal."

Riccardo was busy with another cigarette.

"One gains largely on the Grand Canal," he observed, reflectively.

"Five hundred *lige*," said Tennent.

"A thousand," said Riccardo of the Gray Eyes.

"Suppose, *finalmente*," continued Tennent, "that this unsuccessful rival were to offer you two thousand *lige* to leave Venice this afternoon—and not to return."

Riccardo flicked his ashes lightly into the air. "I would go," he said, briefly.

Tennent spun a coin upon the table, and rose.

"*Tieni il resto!*" he said to the *padrone*. "Shall we take a gondola, my friend? The train leaves at six this evening, and there are two thousand *lige* awaiting you on the Riva degli Schiavoni."

As the gondola crept in toward the Ponte della Pietà, Riccardo lay back upon the cushions, laughed, and then, with intense appreciation, sang a paraphrase, of his own composing:

*Oh, addio, bella Venezia,
Addio, Addio!
Andante via guadagno più
Ti lascio di buon cuor!*

"You are surely going?" asked Tennent.

Riccardo crossed himself, solemnly.

"*Per la santissima croce!*" he answered. Then he laughed again, and twisted his mustache.

Late the following afternoon Antonio was once more waiting under the arches of the Libreria Vecchia, as Tennent turned into the Piazzetta. The daylight was going, softly, tenderly, with a regret almost human at leaving Venice, gilding the tops of San Marco, the Campanile and the

Torre dell' Orologio, while already the twilight, soft-shod and silent, stole into being on the pavement of the square. Gabriel was to be the guest of the Spanish prince whose former invitation he had refused for Costanza's sake, but as he was not expected to dress, and the dinner hour was late, there was an hour yet to spare for the lagoon. The gondola was approaching San Giorgio Maggiore before he realized that Antonio had not spoken, even in reply to his salutation. Before them, the water lay smooth and iridescent as if coated with oil, and, above, a sky of pale saffron was flecked with wisps of pink cloud and streaked with long, thin lines of smoke, combed outward from the town by the slow north wind. No sign of human life was near them, save a city-bound barge from the *caserma* on San Giorgio, propelled by rhythmically swaying soldier-gondoliers, and a sluggish fishing-boat, making in from the Porto di Malamocco, its yellow sail glowing like a topaz in the light of the setting sun.

Suddenly Antonio stopped rowing, and, half-turning in his seat, Gabriel saw that the old man was leaning on his oar with his mild eyes fixed on the big church. Something—almost a premonition—checked the bit of banter that was on the tip of Tennent's tongue, and he waited in silence for the gondolier to speak.

"She is gone, *signore*," he said, presently, sorrow softening his already gentle voice to barely more than a whisper. "I knew how it would be."

"Gone!" repeated Tennent, in amazement. There was no need to ask of whom the other spoke. "Maria gone? But gone where—with whom?"

From a fold of his sash the gondolier drew a folded paper, and, stepping forward on the *poppa*, placed it in Tennent's hands.

"*Ecco, signore*," he said, simply. Tennent almost smiled as he recognized the small blue sheet, with a pair of doves billing in the upper

corner. It had come from a quire that he had bought for Maria the year before, for on the Rio di San Polo a box of stationery possesses the qualities of a widow's cruse. The writing was Maria's, stiff and laborious, with the down-strokes carefully shaded and the capitals elaborately ornate, and the letter was evidently addressed to both Antonio and Costanza.

Carissimi:

When this comes to you I shall have gone with Riccardo. I could not ask you, because I knew you would never consent. He has to go suddenly. I am not to ask him why until we are away—and I could not let him go alone. But he has much money, and will take care of me, and we are to be married in Naples. Oh, forgive me, *carissimi*, forgive the little Maria who loves you. But I love him more. Except for leaving you, I am so happy—so happy!

MARIA.

"We found it last night on her table, *signore*, when she did not come to dinner," said Antonio, as Tennent finished reading and laid the letter on his knee; "and later, as the *signore* did not need me, I went alone in the gondola to the music to see if there might not be a mistake. But there is no mistake, *signore*. Another sang 'Napoli.' He is gone, and with him the little one."

He raised his hands close to his temples with the fingers all crooked and trembling, and turned his eyes up to the wide sunset-painted sky.

"*O Santo Iddio!*" he added, like a prayer. "Do I not know what it means? He has told her of this money—how should he come by it? —and she has believed him. He will take care of her—yes, for a month, *forsè*, not more. Then she will die, or else come back. And if she comes back, *signore*, it will be like one of the little white doves on the Piazza in the time of mud and rain. But there is nothing I can do, *signore*, for I am an old man. I only know that they have gone, and suddenly. If he has money, that is why. He has stolen it."

Crossing his hands over his oar-end, he bowed his head upon them,

and moved it slowly from side to side, while, under the rim of his cap, his white hair, fine as spun silk, moved in the almost imperceptible wind. It was a hard moment for Gabriel, realizing as he did that he had been shrewdly outgeneraled, and that instead of averting disaster he had merely hastened its coming. But, above all things, the American was fair, and even the devil has a due; so there, in the lessening glow of the Venetian sunset, he told Antonio all about it—how he had meant, if Riccardo proved honorable, to give Maria a little dowry—how, finding him otherwise, he had bribed him to go away.

"He came fairly enough by the money, however," he concluded. "But I was a fool, *mio povero*, to interfere. I did my best, but it was a very bad best, Antonio. You may well blame me. I feel that this is altogether my fault."

"No, *signore*," answered the old man, shaking his head; "no, I do not blame. It would have happened anyway, sooner or later. I am sorry the *signore* has lost his money, but I could have told him it would be of no use to speak. When a Neapolitan has gray eyes, *signore*, there is nothing to be said. He does as he will with women."

Now, Tennent was saying to himself that twelve months go quickly. It was the evening of his first day in Naples. He had dined too wisely not to have dined well at the Caffè Umberto I., and, after a stroll to the entrance of the Galleria, which disclosed the fact that a rain of discouraging steadiness was falling, had returned to listen to the music, over a *mezzo* of Munich beer and a couple of long cigars.

There was no mistaking Riccardo of the Gray Eyes. Among his fellow-singers and musicians on the platform he was even more conspicuous than he had been on the illuminated barge, and, when it was his turn, he came forward with the same proud,

almost contemptuous glance over his audience, and announced his song with the same slow drawl that Gabriel remembered so distinctly on the Grand Canal. It was a light but amusingly whimsical song this time, with a ridiculous refrain of "Pirri-pirri pipò! Pirripirri pipò pom!" but it gave Tennent time to pick the whole story out of his memory and piece it together. He had just completed this operation when the previous singer thrust a little cup abruptly under his nose, with a notably premature expression of thanks; and, reinforcing his request with a *lira* note, Tennent sent a message by him to Riccardo. A stranger in the audience who had heard him sing in Venice now asked for "*L'Addio a Napoli*." Would Riccardo sing it?

Riccardo would. A moment later, the six chords of introduction slid out from the platform upon the smoke-thickened atmosphere, and then his rich baritone took up the air:

*"Addio, mia bella Napoli,
Addio, addio!
La tua soave imagine
Chi mai, chi mai scordar potra!"*

Tennent hugged himself at the impression the familiar melody produced upon him. He had the story all clear now, but there had been a method in his request. "*L'Addio a Napoli*" was all that was needed to make him a decidedly unpleasant person for Riccardo to meet. And, of course, they were to meet. Gabriel saw the situation in his mind as the song went on—himself bending over his newspaper as the singer approached, all unsuspi-

cious, with his little cup, and then, looking up suddenly full into the gray eyes, he would demand, "Where is Maria?" He was so absorbed in contemplating this dénouement that he did not notice that the song had ended until the singer was actually at his side. After all, it was Riccardo who spoke first.

"*Signore! Buon Dio, che fortuna!*
But the little wife will be glad!"

He seated himself at the table, and, leaning across, continued, eagerly: "We so often speak of you, because, after all, it was you who made our marriage possible, *non è vero?* Ah, at first I did not think much of you, *signore*, with your money and your talk of a rival, and I was glad to have outwitted you. But afterward, when letters went to and fro between Maria and her people, I understood, *signore*. Now they are with us, the grandparents; yes since three months. We live on the Strada Santa Lucia, below there. It is not a *palazzo*, evidently, but if you would come——"

A slow smile had grown on Tennent's face as the other spoke, and at the pause he bent forward and touched him on the arm.

"Once I told you you were a fine fellow, Riccardo," he said. "Now I mean it! Yes, I will come and see you and Maria and Antonio and Costanza."

"And Gabriele," added Riccardo.
"Gabriele?"

"Gabriele dagli Occhi Grigi," said Riccardo, with a broad grin. "Diamine! He is two months old, and Maria has named him after you!"

26

THE FIRE

L O! in the fire there is a life's reflection:
Smoke for illusions, light for sweet belief;
Flames for the passions, embers for affection;
The sparks for hope, ashes for bitter grief.

LOUIS DODGE.

THIS, TOO, CAN HAPPEN

By Eliza Atkins Stone

BEFORE their acquaintance was a month old he knew that he was hers for eternity. For a time, however—unless Fortune gave her wheel a most unlikely twirl—he could not in honor be hers, she could not in honor be his. She knew what he felt, although he had never told her in words or meant to tell her at all, and he knew that she knew. What she felt, he did not know; she herself hardly knew. He believed that he had himself quite in hand, and he was resolved to make no sign, to go away quietly.

But one night, the night on which they were to say good-bye, it came about that they sat alone together in a room filled with the scent of fresh lilacs, with delicate yellow candle-light and rosy firelight and warm brown dusk. They talked of this and that triviality. So far as words were concerned, Mrs. Grundy herself might have listened to them with complaisance. But by little and little their silences became too frequent, too prolonged, too significant. He rose to go. She, too, rose, holding out her hand frankly. His hand was half extended in return when suddenly he drew it back, and there came into his face a look that made her afraid, and angry, and exultant, and ashamed, and strong, and weak, and infinitely happy, and abysmally miserable, all at once. For the first time her eyes fell before his.

"My God!" he cried out, in a strange, stifled voice. "You, too!"

She swayed slightly, steadied herself with one hand on a table behind her and moved the other before her eyes, as if to brush away a film.

"It is nothing," she said. "I—I don't know what is the matter."

He faced her not a foot away, his eyes blazing, his breath panting.

"The matter is," he returned, almost roughly, "that we love each other."

But her moment of uncertainty was past. She stood very straight and met his gaze steadily.

"I don't admit that," she said; "but shall I tell you what would happen if it were so?"

"Yes," he answered. "Tell me what would happen if we loved each other."

"If we did—"

"If we loved each other," he dictated.

"If we loved each other," she repeated, quietly, "since you are strong and I am strong, we should put away from us every bit of our love that we might not honorably cherish, and we should keep the rest with our whitest thoughts, our highest imaginings and aspirations, all our lives long; and we should do our work. That is what would happen."

His eyes were still fixed upon hers; but now there came to pass a wonderful, a beautiful thing. Slowly, slowly, everything that had terrified and angered and humiliated and grieved her, everything that would have been bitter to remember, faded out of his look; and everything in it that had gladdened and strengthened and blessed and exalted her, everything that was good to remember as long as she lived, shone out clearer and stronger a thousand-fold.

At length he squared his shoulders and drew a deep breath.

"You are right," he said; "that is what would happen."

An end of soft ribbon floated somewhere about her dress. He lifted it, set his lips to it for an instant. Then he turned and went out.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DAY

THE far-off hills are very blue, as blue as the painted sky

Where the silvery fleece clouds never move while the earth goes drifting by;
While the earth goes drifting idly by, and the white sun burns above,

And the heat-waves flicker over the grass,

And the bees through the rose-beds pass and re-pass;
And I in my hammock swing and sigh for you, and the night, and love.

Under the hills the long fields lie, and the still woods stretch between,
And never a breath stirs the yellow rye nor ripples the wheat's pale sheen,
And the little farms in the hollows seem to doze to the croon of the dove;

But the shadows reach from the West at last,

And the slow-footed hours creep on and are past,
While I in my hammock swing and dream of you, and the night, and love.

Oh, lagging minutes that bring joy home, and swift that bear it away,
How fast we would fill the dark to come with the hours we grudge the day!
So many years shall the earth swing on, that our brief bliss reck not of,

While our time runs out like a tale that is told,

And the warmth of our youth in the dusk grows cold.
But I shall not care if we both drift down through the long, long night with love.

CAROLINE DUER.



DEFINITE DEFINITIONS

A N after-dinner speaker—your wife, several hours after.

A bachelor's ball—Scotch.

The Chinese problem—the missing shirt.

Seats of the mighty—at the opera.



IN ITS PROPER CLASS

FIVE-O'CLOCK HOSTESS—Don't you think this light-raised angel food is just lovely?

VICTIM—Yes, but I should call it—er—a sort of fallen angel.

THE "BETTY" SYNDICATE

By Beatrice Heron-Maxwell

I HAVE been wondering how on earth father came to let Lady Langrishe carry me off to London, and where the money is coming from to pay for my dresses and all the other delights of my first season. Lady Langrishe said I might call her Cousin Sophia; but I don't wish to, for I don't believe she is any relation of father at all; in fact, I suspect she is the girl to whom he was engaged years and years ago, who threw him over. Well, she isn't rich; I could tell that before I had been here twenty-four hours. Certainly, there are a butler and a carriage, and the house is luxuriously furnished—I fancy she has taken it for the season—but somehow I feel that she is not rich; and as father gives me only thirty pounds a year to dress on, and she intends to take me to all the smart parties, I don't quite see how it is going to be done.

It has been such a funny morning! I had no idea that people rushed at you directly you came to town and overwhelmed you with civilities. I thought I should have to blush unseen, like the violets in my own bit of garden at home, and that everyone would despise me as a little country mouse.

But directly after breakfast Madame Coralie was announced, and when I said I didn't know her, and it could not be for me, Lady Langrishe explained:

"You had better go and see her, dear; she is a dressmaker, and you must have some frocks."

"But, Lady Langrishe," I said, "I'm afraid I can't afford them."

"Oh, that will be all right," she

answered, and she smiled—I like her better when she is grave. "Go and talk to her about a dress for Lady Halidane's ball."

Madame Coralie went into raptures when she saw me. She kept confiding her opinion of me in French to an assistant she had brought with her to take measurements.

"*Ça ira*," she said, after walking round me twice and looking me up and down, "*teint pâle et clair, yeux bleus, avec des cheveux noirs, combinaison rare qui se prête à des costumes distinguées et uniques, quelque chose d'originale. On peut va loin avec cette figure et cette taille. N'est-ce pas, Ermentrude?*"

And the assistant nodded mysteriously, with her mouth full of pins.

They produced fashion-plates and patterns galore, and whatever I admired they put aside as if it were decided on, until at last I began to feel a little worried, and suggested fetching Lady Langrishe.

"I was only thinking of one dress," I said. "And I am not quite sure what price Lady Langrishe wishes me to give for that. Perhaps—" But Madame Coralie interrupted me, suavely.

Mademoiselle need not trouble herself. Lady Langrishe was an old customer of hers, and placed full confidence in her. She would guarantee that mademoiselle should be dressed in a manner fitting a young lady of society making her *début*. As for the bill—Madame Coralie shrugged her shoulders, implying that this was the smallest item on the list—that was for by-and-bye. There would be no trouble

about that. When mademoiselle was settled down would be time enough.

"But I'm not going to settle down," I said; "at least not in town. I'm going back to a village rectory, where all these lovely things would be out of place."

Madame Coralie's face expressed amusement. She begged leave to differ from mademoiselle. Young ladies like her did not remain in country rectories. Mademoiselle had a future before her, and in the meanwhile Coralie was her humble servant. The dresses would be sent home one by one as they were finished.

I was still trying to make matters clear to her when a card was brought to me with "Vivette" on it, and in another moment Coralie and her handmaid had vanished, and a lady of odalisque appearance was bowing graciously to me and producing hats—I must say they were the very prettiest hats I have ever seen—out of a bandbox.

"I don't think I want hats this morning," I said, feebly.

I felt that the words were true in the letter, but most untrue in the spirit, for who would not want a hat when a thing all chiffon and feathers and innocent-looking baby roses was put on her head, at a becoming angle, by a master hand?

Vivette, with a brief word of commendation, handed me a small mirror and tied a scented veil, with beauty spots on it, round the hat.

"How much is this one?" I faltered, temporizing, for I knew that in another moment I must take it off and decline it resolutely, with thanks.

Vivette murmured an inaudible reply, and lifting it deftly, replaced it by an inspiration in blue, a dream of fair fabrics, which seemed to suit me even better than the first.

"That brings out the blue in mademoiselle's eyes; it is the hat for mademoiselle. The Countess of Daredale has a reception—a garden-party—next week; this will do nicely. Now for some morning hats."

I waved them away, politely but

firmly. "They are very pretty," I said, "but I could never pay for them, so it is no use showing them to me."

Vivette looked hurt. "There is no occasion to pay," she replied; "the hats will pay for themselves. Mademoiselle's face will recommend them; if people admire the hats, mademoiselle will mention Vivette. And later on, for her trousseau, *par exemple*, mademoiselle will be a good customer, doubtless."

"But I am not going to be married," I protested. "And even if I were, I should have to do without the trousseau. Father could not afford such a luxury."

Vivette remained unimpressed. Perhaps mademoiselle's fiancé, then, would be rich, and there would be no necessity to trouble monsieur her father. The three hats to select for mademoiselle were the white, the blue and the one with scarlet ribbons and honeysuckle. For the moment these would do, but others could be sent for approval at any time.

I rang the bell and asked Binkman to tell Lady Langrishe that I should be glad if she could come and speak to me for a moment; and I also directed him to say I was out if there should be any further callers for me.

Binkman, respectfully resolute, said her ladyship had gone for a drive, and had left a message for me, begging that I would see anyone who called on business during the morning, and adding that she would not be back until lunch.

I stared at Binkman in dismay, but there was nothing to be gained from his impassive face. To him, this perplexing state of affairs was merely part of the day's work, and I suspected him of already looking on me as a sort of family investment, in which he also had a share.

There was, however, a flicker of pensive satisfaction in his glance when he asked whether he should send her ladyship's maid to take the hats up-stairs, and whether it would

now be convenient for me to see the Chevalier d'Yste.

"Chevalier d'Yste?" I said. "Who is he? What does he wish?"

"He has called, with her ladyship's permission, to arrange for your sitting, miss," replied Binkman.

"My sitting!" I seemed to have resolved myself into a sort of echo, with no power of original expression about me.

"I understand he is to take your photograph for some society paper."

"Show him up," I said, desperately.

The chevalier entered, bowed, ran his fingers through a mass of dark hair, and looked at me with the cold, unfeeling eye of an artist.

"You can give me a sitting to-day—to-morrow?" he said, with a foreign accent. And then his eye lighted on the blue hat, and he became fired with enthusiasm.

"Ah, that is right," he said. "The hat and some chiffon twisted round the throat—not too high—it will make a so-charming picture. That is all we want."

But I thought otherwise, and the chevalier had to retire with only a vague assurance from me that I would mention the matter to her ladyship.

He was followed in rapid succession by a man with soaps and face-powder, *filets-de-front* and side-combs; a lady's maid in search of a place, who professed to be able to apply cosmetics invisibly; an emissary from Woodhouse, the great habit-maker, and a man from a livery-stable about a riding-horse.

I dismissed them all in turn, and was just going to put on my hat and go for a walk, running away from the enemy, in fact, when Binkman appeared once more and said, solemnly:

"If you please, miss, Viscount Gormanby is in the drawing-room."

Then the spirit of rebellion entered into me, and I said, "Very well, Binkman; he must wait there until Lady Langrishe returns. I am just going out."

"He merely wishes to leave a message for her ladyship," said Binkman, unmoved, "and said he would prefer to give it to you, if you would kindly see him for a moment."

With a mental resolve that the interview should be sharp and short, I descended to the drawing-room and entered.

Good heavens! this was the man whom I had seen with Lady Langrishe just before she came to the rectory on the eventful afternoon that decided my fate. I recollect him at once, because he had stared at me so rudely.

He did not look in the least like a viscount. I should have thought he was a groom out for a holiday. His voice—a husky voice—grated on me with the first words he uttered.

"I think we have met before," he said, with what he probably considered an agreeable smile, "though I have not yet had the pleasure of being introduced. I saw you down in Sussex one day with Lady Langrishe."

"Yes," I said, frostily. "You wished to leave a message, I think?"

"Oh—ah—yes, of course; if you really will be so kind as to give it her. I called to know if Lady Langrishe will let me drive her down to Ranelagh on Saturday, and if you will do me the honor to accom—"

"I don't know at all what Lady Langrishe's engagements are," I replied, "but I will give her your message. She will not be in for some time, I fear."

I carefully refrained from sitting down, in case he should feel encouraged to prolong his visit, and after a few minutes more of desultory conversation he took his leave.

I rang the bell for Binkman with relief, and as the drawing-room door closed on Lord Gormanby, I said, aloud: "I don't like you, and I'm not going to Ranelagh with you—if I can help it."

The door had reopened, and he was looking in.

"Don't you?" he said. "I wonder why? I took a fancy to you the first

instant I saw you. I hope—I think—you'll come to Ranelagh." And this time, before I could answer, he was really gone.

Then, all of a sudden, a singular feeling of helplessness came over me, a sensation I had never before experienced; and I began to wish I hadn't ever left the dear old shabby rectory and the humdrum dowdy ways of home. It seemed as if I had become some one else who was going to have her life lived for her, and would never have a will of her own again. I began to remember all sorts of things and people that I had forgotten, and somehow they all seemed dear and delightful, and ever so far away.

I sat down on one of the huge sofas and buried my head in a cushion, and thought and thought, until, with a jump, I realized that the door had opened and some one had come into the room and was advancing toward me.

I started up, winking away two tears that had come into my eyes without my knowing it, and then I stood still, while my heart seemed to stop beating.

Some one was close to me, was beside me, was holding both my hands in his strong clasp, and as I cried, "Morris! Is it really you?" he said, while he bent down and looked into my face:

"I can scarcely believe it is Betty! My sweetheart, how beautiful you have grown!"

"How handsome you have grown!" I answered, pretending to mock him, but I meant it all the same. If anyone had asked me to describe Morris Weston a moment before he came into the room I should have drawn a very different person to the one I saw now.

"The same eyes," he said, slowly, "the same hair—only it's 'done up' now; the same lips—Betty, are they *quite* the same since that day in the meadow?"

I tried to snatch my hands away from him, to stop the color from

rushing to my cheeks; but Morris had no mercy on me.

"Do you remember our good-bye?" he said. "You looked a witch that day, Betty; you were all in red, and your face pale, and your eyes glowing. I have seen you like that every day since I left you—just shut my eyes, and there you were. And I told you I was going to make some money and come back for you, and you promised you would wait three years. Betty, you were laughing at me, but I meant it, every word—and the three years aren't over until next week. And I've come!"

I couldn't answer. I had been thinking of the meadow just before he came, and wondering.

"Betty," he said, and he lifted my hands up to his neck and held them there, "tell me there's no one else and I'm not too late! Tell me! I have waited nearly three years, and I can't wait another minute."

"There's no one else," I whispered, "and I think I've been waiting, too, Morris, though I didn't know it."

We didn't say any more for a little time after that, and then I began to remember Lady Langrishe, and the frocks, and all the other horrid things.

"Morris," I said, lifting my head in dismay, "how did you know I was here?"

"I went down to the rectory to find you, and your father told me; so I took the next train to town. I was in a mortal fright for fear you would be 'the proud bride of a ducal coronet' before I could get at you."

"But," I said, "Lady Langrishe has—"

"Oh, I know all about her!" Morris laughed a little, oddly. "I met a girl on the way home who had stayed with Lady Langrishe once, for a season; and she told me things. I'll make it all right with her, Betty; don't you worry."

"But," I said again, and I felt the blood rushing wildly to my cheeks, "there are all sorts of difficulties, Morris. Dresses and hats and soap—and, oh, how I hate them all! But

they must be paid for, Morris, and I don't know what Lady Langrishe will say."

"How much will they come to, do you think, Betty?"

I tried to calculate, but gave it up in despair. "Suppose," I stammered, "they were to come to—oh, Morris, what can you be thinking of me?—a hundred pounds?"

Morris burst into joyous laughter. "I'm good for a thousand," he said, "at this moment; and Lady Langrishe is welcome to it, as long as I get my little girl. You shall have as many frocks and as much soap as you

like, Betty. I'm not so poor as I was three years ago, and it's worth all the gold in the world to me to find the same Betty that I left in the meadow—frank and honest—and free! though she has grown so pretty that a little syndicate was formed to exploit her. I shall like to see her ladyship's face when she finds her financial scheme has come to nothing—nipped in the bud, eh, sweet?"

"Oh, Morris, I daren't tell her," I said, light dawning at last.

"But I dare!" he answered; "leave Lady Langrishe to me."

And I did.



THE POET TO HIS WIFE

NOW the love-song's written,
And I'm feeling gay;
Send the airy nothing
In the mail away.

Watch, then, for the postman,
In the gilded morn,
When the dew is gleaming
On the rose and thorn.

Look not on the dark side,
Imogene, my soul,
When the golden "fiver"
Means a ton of coal.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



AN ELOPEMENT

SUMMER HOTEL CLERK (*to bride and groom*)—Do you wish a northern or a southern exposure?

BRIDE (*blushingly*)—Oh, please, sir, no exposure at all!



THE LIMIT

"CREDULOUS person, isn't he?"

"Credulous? Why, he's bought an automobile that he believes won't break down!"



TWO AT SEA

A FLOAT on the sea of passion,
Without a compass or chart,
But the glow of your eye shows the sun is high,
By the sextant of my heart.
I know we are nearing the tropics
By the languor that round us lies;
And the smile of your mouth says the course is south,
And the port is Paradise.

We have left gray skies behind us,
We sail under skies of blue;
You are off with me on lovers' sea,
And I am away with you.
We have not a single sorrow,
And I have but one fear—
That my lips may miss one ardent kiss
From the mouth that is smiling near.

There is no land of Winter,
There is no world of care,
There are bloom and mirth all over the earth,
And love—love, everywhere.
Our boat is the barge of pleasure,
And whatever port we sight,
The touch of your hand will make the land
The Harbor of Pure Delight.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



THE QUARREL OF THE STARS

THE LION—They're at it again. Same old trouble.

THE LIONESS—What is it, my dear?

THE LION—The monkey's name on the circus posters is in larger type than the elephant's.



IN A NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE

“MAMMA, I feel so kind of downcast and blue!”

“Run out, my dear, and take a walk in the cemetery. It will do you good.”

THE WINTER ROSE

By Francis Dana

EDOM stands on the shore of Puget Sound, in that incongruous clime where the Japan current brings a rainy season far northward in Winter, and enables the real-estate agents that abound there to sing rhapsodies of eternal Spring to a regardless world.

All about are the solemn woods and unchanging heights; below are the tide-flats, green waters and deserted wharves. It is dull in Edom. One sees the same people day after day, hears them say always the same things, goes to the post-office from force of habit—for there is no reason why anyone should write to a dweller in that forsaken community—eats, sleeps. If dreams come, they are of the kind that merely bore one.

People who have come from without, and are obliged to stay, look about them, try a while to make enlivening innovations, and lapse into sullen endurance of inactivity. There is a worse stage beyond—a sort of stagnant content, in which a man forgets, and becomes as the beasts that perish.

It had been particularly irksome to Brooks, whose life hitherto had been rather bright and eventful. He had found an opening in Edom when the "boom" was on; when the boom broke the opening closed over him, and there he was, with nothing in particular to do and no chance of escape that he could see.

He was stagnating toward the last and fatal stage, and the pathos of it was that the change in him was so gradual he did not know it. Yet if he could have seen himself as he was then, side by side with himself as he

had come to Edom, he would have seen two different beings—the one, trim, alert, energetic; the other, slouching, dreary, patient of futility. He did not know, and he did not care.

He sat, one morning, in his office, gazing out of the window, tired of the open book in his hand. The distant British Columbian Winter, raging in the Rockies, had invaded the warmer forests of the Sound with a bitter breath and whitened the ground for an hour, and there was a single hardy red rose with a dash of snow on its chilled petals.

There came a knock at the door. Brooks felt sure, from experience, it could be no one he cared to see. He did not move, and his voice, as he said "Come in!" with a muttered addition, was by no means courteous.

He did not look up when the door opened, but waited resignedly for some inane utterance, such as "What's the good word?" or "Cold morning, ain't it?" But there was silence.

Brooks became aware of a dainty, unusual presence, fetchingly clad, a bewitching face, all with an unmistakable look of authority accustomed to obedience, which blended charmingly with its exceeding prettiness. Staring—for he had forgotten better ways—he saw more; an expression of curiosity, slight amusement and thorough disapproval, of which he felt himself the cause.

He got on his feet, dropping his book on the floor, moving his hat with one hand, his pipe with the other. It was suddenly and sharply borne in on him that he was some days unshorn, that he needed dusting,

sponging, pressing, mending—that his boots were a sight to be—anything but seen. None of these things had troubled him for a long time before.

"I beg your pardon!" said he, much in earnest.

She thought the apology was for his inattention, hat and pipe, but in fact he was humbly asking forgiveness for his very existence, which seemed to him at the time to be an unwarrantable liberty on his part.

"Is Mr. Hall here?" said she.

Hall, who shared his office, was gone on a week's hunting, but Brooks had not sufficiently recovered his presence of mind to explain the fact.

"No; he—he's out."

She turned toward the door.

"Won't you—will you—leave any word? Is it anything I can do?" Brooks asked, coming out of his daze.

"No—I think not, thank you. I am the teacher—I wished to see Mr. Hall about some school business."

Her hand was on the door-knob. Brooks was seized with the impulse to stop her, and keep her by any means short of violence.

"I'm expecting him every minute," said he.

It was strictly true. He was expecting every minute that Hall would return in a few days.

She hesitated—he offered a chair—she sat down.

There followed a period of intense discomfort for Brooks. He hazarded remarks on commonplace topics—she answered shortly, with conspicuous reserve. He remembered that there had been a time when girls, thrown casually into his company, had not held him objectionable.

A man from the woods, huge, bearded, bluff, rushed in.

"What was that about Hall?" he shouted, gruffly. "Said he wouldn't be back till Thursday, did you? All right. You tell him I tried to see him, and now I won't be in again for a month! So long!"

He tramped out, and the girl met Brooks's guilty look with calm disgust.

"I think," said she, "I won't wait—till Thursday," and rose.

Brooks opened the door, followed her out, plucked the shivering rose, and held it out to her in mute apology.

She looked at it, critically, saying, "Sadly out of season, isn't it?" and passed on.

Brooks went back into the office, dangling his rejected rose, hating himself.

He thought of the time when girls of breeding and fair presence had been a part of his daily life, and not phenomenal, and therewith came other memories of the existence that had been not long ago, but now seemed very, very far behind.

Here, at all events, was a delightful reality, present in Edom. He would meet her—he would be introduced—there would be something to live for once more. How to meet her?

He thought of certain dismal social functions he had feared and shunned carefully, of neglected religious privileges with accompanying opportunities for enlarging the sphere of acquaintance, of sundry associations for the mental improvement of the Edomites, at which he had scoffed. Perhaps she might be met at some of these. He knew that Edom expected its teachers to endure them—he, too, would endure them.

Then there came on him, filling his soul with dismay, a full sense of his shortcomings—namely, his outer garments. He was quite unpresentable. Looking far into the future, he saw no prospect of renovation. The predicament amused and enlivened him. In Edom, where funerals are hailed as tending to break the monotony, a new sensation, even of agony, is not unwelcome.

At least he might get an introduction from Hall, which in the course of time he did. But Hall was the school superintendent, and as his acquaintance with Miss Lee was only official, his introduction went for little. Brooks acquired the right to remove his semi-disreputable hat when he met her in the post-office or

on the lazy street, to make a conventional remark when chance brought them long enough together—nothing more.

At such times she was not uncivil—that was all—but Brooks began to look forward to such meetings as beatitudes, and yet to be dreadfully afraid and uncomfortable when they occurred.

He wondered why. The symptoms were plain enough, but he had never had the real thing before.

At last he understood what ailed him, and looking backward, hated his whole life because it had all tended to this—that he should be stranded in Edom, eminently useless to himself and others, and worst of all, as it seemed to him, utterly worthless in the eyes of the one person in his narrowed world whom he desired to know well.

He was tempted to go to her and tell her—he even started on his way—but turned back. It would only have put an end to what had as yet no beginning, a state of things against which nature—outside of Hibernian Erin—rebels.

He turned back and took the withered Winter rose from its hiding-place, and made up his mind what to do and what not to do. He would plan, work, toil, slave—even in Edom he would “hustle”—until he made his way up and out and back to the old life; he would accomplish something and be somebody. Then, unless something dreadful should have happened to her meanwhile, he would know what to do next.

Till then he would hold aloof and keep in the background. It had seemed to his anxious mind, of late, that his slight deviations from the beaten path to meet her, his little attempts to be agreeable, bothered her. It should not happen again.

Now, when he accused himself of the heinous crime of bothering Miss Lee he was greatly overestimating the effect of his operations. She could never have guessed from his manner the trouble in his mind or its des-

perate wish to reach hers and convey its message in those brief conversations and apparently casual meetings—nor could he, moved as he was, realize that she had not guessed it.

He avoided her, after that, and humbly hoped she might be grateful, but his other plans for betterment came to naught. There was no hold or footing for enterprise in Edom.

Just before the end of her school year—no teacher ever stays at Edom more than one year—when he met her suddenly, face to face, in a bend of the forest path outside the town, he so far lost his resolution as to ask if she meant to go away.

“Yes,” said she, and stopped to talk, smiling, for the glamour of the forest Summer was on her, and her mood was idle for once, and kindly toward man and beast.

“I had a gold-fish once,” she added, thoughtfully, “and for a long time I forgot to change the water in the globe. It died. In Edom one sympathizes with the gold-fish and, taking warning, goes away.”

Her unusual graciousness of manner, with the thought of her imminent departure, was more than Brooks could bear.

He became temporarily insane. “Miss Lee,” said he, speaking stiffly, because he was keeping back what he must not say, “I have a request to make.”

“A request?” said she, with some surprise, and a return to her usual reserve of manner.

“Yes, please. It’s a great deal to ask—but since you are going away—would you—could it—may I—write to you sometimes?”

Her eyes opened wide.

“Of course, I don’t mean often, or much,” he said, in haste, “but just a little, once in a while.”

She was very much surprised, having no idea what this could mean.

“Why, no—I think not, Mr. Brooks,” said she. “I really can’t imagine why you should. Good morning, Mr. Brooks!” She passed

him, quickly turning the bend of the path, to be seen by him no more in Edom.

"Of course she would take it so," he thought. "I was a fool to ask. And besides—look at me! Only look at me!"

He leaned against a tree, gazing dejectedly down at his boots, which ought to have gone, long since, to their reward.

But the girl, as she went her way, said, "Mad—mad as a hatter; I have thought so before, now and then. No wonder—living in Edom!"

Long after, she, stricken in years, rode one day in a street-car in an Eastern city. She had far to go into the suburbs, and the other passengers got off one by one, till only one was left—a stout and rosy old gentleman, with the whitest of hair and linen, and an air of being somebody and liking it.

He observed her with a closer attention than she thought becoming—a long, broad, penetrating stare.

She returned it with a calm look of careless scrutiny that had remained over and above unto her out of the past.

"By Jove!" said he, explosively, "beg pardon—may I ask a question?"

"A direct question is sometimes more endurable than being stared at, sir," said the old lady.

He beamed with recognition of her voice and manner.

"Then may I ask," said he, "what earthly harm it could have done to let me write, after all? You could have put a stop to it any time if you didn't like it, you know!"

"Dear me, Mr. Brooks—I should never have known you!" said she.

"I knew you. But, Miss Lee, why wouldn't you let me write?"

"Mrs. Pettingill, if you please," said she. "Why should I?"

"You might have!"

"No, I mightn't."

"I have a great deal to thank you for, Miss—Mrs. Pettingill," said

Brooks; "more than you can possibly guess."

"For not letting you write me? Thanks. That is a compliment—but it's true, you know. I'm glad you see it from my point of view."

"No," said he. "But you waked me up. I was getting content in a sort of way—disgracefully content—with Edom! Imagine it!"

"I can't," said she. "Were you, though, truly?"

"Yes. And you came and gave me a glimpse of—well, madam—of something to live for. I never got it—but I lived for it! After you went away I got out of Edom. If it hadn't been for you I'd have been there to-day—dead or alive—no difference—and, bless me, madam! bless me! Think what I'd have been by this time!"

"So you would," said she. "Tell me about it. You came away—and what have you been doing ever since?"

"For two years I simply hustled, and, in a way, 'struck oil.' The next few years I looked for you."

"Nonsense!"

"I did, madam! I did! I had made up my mind to do that—that was what I lived for. But I never found you."

She was utterly amazed a moment—then her face took on that softer look he had longed to see upon it years ago.

"I am sorry," said she, after a while. "Not—that you didn't find me, but sorry for the poor, wasted years when you tried. Do you know, I thought you were rather—well—insane—in Edom? But, anyway, I couldn't have let you write."

"You could!" cried Brooks, who had developed, with age and prosperity, a liver.

"I could not," said she, who, also, had a temper. "And I don't care to be contradicted—by an entire stranger."

"It's the truth, madam! I say yes! I am right!" cried the old gentleman.

"And I say *no!*" said the old lady,
with a quiet voice and flashing eyes.

"Rawlston street," drawled the conductor. She rose; Brooks got out, helped her to the sidewalk, and insisted on seeing her safe to her door, though he was still bursting with indignation and she calmly severe, and their parting was curt and ungracious.

Next day the Widow Pettingill, sitting alone, received a great box of roses and a note, written with a rather tremulous hand, but redolent of perennial youth:

A single rose has weathered the snow—
I keep it warm by the ingleside—
One that bloomed for me long ago,
Beauty and fragrance that never have
died.

In the dainty point of a maiden's foot—
Over my heart as she lightly passed—
Thorn and blossom and clinging root,
There it shall live for me unto the last.

Ever I bless the sweetness born
Into my life, though its root be pain—
Ever I bless the unmerciful thorn
Stinging my soul to its work again!

To which Mrs. Pettingill, *née* Lee, as of right entitled to the last word, replied:

I never said you might write, you know—but for this one time you shall have an answer.

I understand now, fully—and if all you say is true I am sorry—and glad—sorry for the thorn, very glad for the rose.

But you can see—from the latter part of our conversation on the car—how we should have got on together had your dreams come true. So you will admit it was quite as well I never let you write.

Sincerely,
MAUDE PETTINGILL.

"Obstinate old woman!" cried Brooks, who had his gout. "Still—but for her, I'd never have got out of Edom! Think of it! Think of it!" And he took a crumbling rose from a little box of Western cedar.



OH, LET ME LIFT THY VEIL!

OH, let me lift thy veil, dear bride!
Oh, lift thy veil to me!
If clouds the fairest moon did hide,
Less fair the moon would be.

And if the sun be in thy hair,
On sunlight I will live;
Or if the midnight nestle there,
To Night my soul I'll give.

Then let me lift thy veil, dear bride,
And let mine eyes declare
The love my lips in vain had tried
To tell thy beauty rare.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.



A SMALL THING

THE WIFE—Oh, George, I've lost my bathing-suit! What shall I do?
THE HUSBAND—Don't say anything about it, and it won't be missed.

THE CLIFF DWELLERS

HIGH up in the mesa we dwell,
 The Jenkins and Simpsons among,
 (The mesa yclept "Noon-pa-rrell")
 In the pure aboriginal tongue.)
 Our stronghold a chamber or so
 Hollowed out in the side of the wall.
 (Perhaps it will aid you to know
 A "flat" it is styled by us all.)

From our eyrie straight down may we peer
 Through the gorge, right and left, at our feet;
 And spy 'mid its barriers sheer.
 ("Tis the cañon "East Steenty-teenth street.")
 And reaching as far to the west
 As a man in two long days may walk,
 Is a vista of chasm and crest,
 Which forms the pueblo "Noo Yawk."

At noon we descend from repose,
 Forth going in sunshine or wet,
 Alert for assault by our foes—
 The Street-cars, and Autos, *et cet.*
 At eve, safe returned from our ways,
 We reap of our husband-ry craft,
 And taste of those things that we raise—
 By means of the dumb-waiter shaft.

EDWIN L. SABIN.



PARTING AT LONG ISLAND

HE—Good-bye, Madge, dear!
 (*The ocean waves.*)
SHE—Good-bye, dearest Jack!
 (*The seaside.*)
HE—Kiss me just once more.
 (*We heard the Sound.*)



AUTOMOBILIST—I'm not satisfied with this mask.
 "Doesn't it disguise your face?"
 "Yes; but I want one that will disguise my intentions."

THE VENGEANCE OF MR. LIVINGSTONE

By Justus Miles Forman

"**B**UT bless my soul!" protested Jimmy Rogers, "she isn't beautiful—she's hardly pretty."

"My dear old son," said Livingstone, wagging an impressive finger, "there is no woman alive, granting that she's under seventy and not positively deformed or anything, who can't be made to believe that she is beautiful—if you go about it in the proper way."

"How did you go about it?" demanded Jimmy Rogers, curiously.

"That," said Mr. Livingstone, with decision, "is a most impertinent question, and one that I must refuse to answer. It's enough that I went about it in the proper way. She's quite convinced that she is a beauty, and that no one has ever really understood or appreciated her before."

Jimmy Rogers sniffed, and beckoned a waiter to refill the glasses—the two were sitting under the awning of the Café d'Alençon on the Place de Rennes.

"After all," said he, unkindly, "it's a rather nasty trick, isn't it, setting in with cool deliberation to cut a man out with a girl you don't give a rap for, yourself?"

"I don't care," cried Livingstone, fiercely, "whether it's a nasty trick or not. I'll get even with that Siddons man if I have to commit murder to do it. I've no more moral nature left, so you can't appeal to it. I've nothing but a thirst for revenge. Why, curse him, he's made me the laughing-stock of the whole Quarter! No, I've no scruple whatever over cutting him out. I'd do much worse things."

Now, the trouble was something like this: Young Siddons, who in working hours was a very serious and an exceedingly talented painter, almost *arrived*, had what he proudly considered a sense of humor; and it occurred to him, one day, just after he had passed Gerald Livingstone decorating, as was his wont, the *terrasse* of some café, that it would be a most humorous thing to spread about the Quarter a report that Jerry Livingstone was spending far too much of his time behind a little iron table, and that it was a pity so fine a chap should take to drink.

Now, of course, everyone in Paris knew Livingstone, and knew that any such notion was quite absurd. But this prevented them not at all from taking up young Siddons's little jest with an unlooked-for enthusiasm, till the indignant and raving Mr. Livingstone was reduced almost to the point of insanity. Temperance tracts were sent him through the post with a truly admirable anonymity, or were laid conspicuously on the reading tables of the Art Club, on the Quai Conti, which he frequented. He could not come into the club-rooms without seeing a significantly wagging head from a group in the corner, and hearing, in some one's carefully elevated voice, remarks upon the frightful increase of inebriety noticeable in the Quarter.

He could not suggest, when out with a few of the men, the advisability of repairing to a near-by café for refreshment, without having them all make embarrassed excuses and say they were not thirsty. He could not indulge in an innocent *apéritif* before

dinner, or a liqueur after it, but some one he knew would pass by and regard him with a worried and anxious brow, or even strive to lure him away.

Jimmy Rogers himself made a misguided attempt at something of the sort as the two turned, one evening, into the Café du Dome, but upon suffering immediate bodily assault lost all interest in the joke, and told the puffed-up and vain-glorious Siddons that he had best drop it. This idea Siddons triumphantly laughed to scorn, and rushed onward to his own undoing.

If Siddons had been temperate enough to confine his pleasantries to the men, all might have gone well—for him, that is—but over-success had rendered him foolish, and he took to spreading the thing among the women of the Anglo-American colony. This was where he made his great mistake, for Gerald Livingstone was the most popular young man in all Paris where petticoats congregate, and women, as Siddons should have known, look at a practical joke with none of the evil joy that fills the bosoms of their husbands and brothers.

So among them Mr. Livingstone found balm and indignant sympathy, and in the end some very practical advice. He happened in one afternoon at a tea over in the Avenue Kléber, and was maneuvered into a corner by a certain very dear and very unmodern old lady, the kindest, gentlest soul imaginable, who wept over him like a grandmother and besought him for his far-away family's sake to struggle against the temptations of rum and riotous living. Siddons beamed from the doorway.

This seemed to Livingstone the final straw, the crowning humiliation, and he fled back across the river in impotent rage, along with a girl he knew, who happened to be leaving the tea at the same time. The girl was very nice to him, very tactful and not too sympathetic, and fed him green mint and biscuits in her boudoir till he was once more able to speak coherently.

"I tell you," said Mr. Livingstone, gloomily, scattering biscuit crumbs over the rug, "I tell you it will all end by my having to cut out—leave Paris, till this beastly thing has blown over. It's gone beyond all bearing. I've some sense of humor, you know, and I don't mind an ordinary joke; but the men in this place don't know when to stop. I've already lost three of my best friends through having to punch their heads, and every silly little ass of a *nouveau* looks at me with mingled fright and admiration, as if I were one of those temperance orator's 'horrible examples.' I tell you I've gone half balmy over it! I'd jolly well like to drown that Siddons man, or wrench his beastly neck!"

"Isn't there something you could do to him?" demanded the girl, wrinkling her brows perplexedly. "Isn't there some way in which you could get even? Wait, wait! I have it. Oh, but I have it!"

She sprang up with an ecstatic little giggle and went over to the window, where she stood for a moment, considering.

"Eh, what?" said Livingstone, apathetically. "What have you? No, there's nothing I can do to him. I've thought of every possibility." And he poured himself another liqueur glass of green mint, shaking a melancholy head.

"Look here!" said the girl, facing him again; "I've a plan. You wouldn't stop at anything, would you?"

"Stop at anything?" cried the overwrought Livingstone. "I tell you I'd murder the brute if only I knew of some slow and painful way of doing it."

"Well, then," said the girl, "cut him out with that red-haired Forrester person. He's quite mad over her. Nothing would humiliate him so much."

Livingstone gave a little astonished, incredulous laugh.

"Cut him—oh, nonsense!" he cried. "Why, the chap may be seriously in love with her! He may be going

to marry her. Oh, no; after all, there are certain limits to what I'd care to do."

"Marry her!" scoffed the girl. "He no more wants to marry her than you do! I know all about it, because he was silly enough to bore me with it, one day. He is in love with her to a certain extent, I fancy, but he doesn't want to marry anybody. It would be merely his pride you'd hurt by cutting him out. Oh, but you'd hurt that cruelly! Siddons has heaps of pride. He'd never get over the blow!"

"But, I say," argued Livingstone, "how do you know that I could do the trick? How do you know that I could cut him out if I should try? How do you know she wouldn't prefer Siddons?"

The girl looked at him curiously. Then she gave another laugh, a different sort of laugh, and looked away.

"Oh, I—I wouldn't worry about that if I were you," said she; "you won't have any difficulty in cutting him out. Take my word for it."

Mr. Livingstone sprang up, with a light of decision in his eye.

"By Jove," he cried, "I'll have a try at it! It'll knock him about awfully, won't it? Eh, what? That is, you know, if I succeed. But, I say, there's the girl to be thought of! It's rather a low trick to play on her, isn't it?"

"The girl," observed his friend, "deserves it. You take my word. She won't be hurt any. She'll be pleased to death—vain little cat!"

"Why, then," said he, "that's all right; I'll try it. I'll commence tonight at the Cooper dance thing."

"And you—you'll tell me," ventured the girl, in rather an eager tone, "you'll keep me posted on how the thing goes? You'll—come and make reports?"

"Why, of course I will!" cried Livingstone. "Aren't we fellow-conspirators? Didn't you suggest the plan?"

He took the girl's hands and shook them up and down, beaming delight-

edly on her. He appeared quite to forget to let them go.

"I think you've saved my life," said he, humorously. "Just you name your reward when I've laid Siddons in the dust. If you'd care for that diamond thing over in the Louvre, or the Russian crown jewels, or anything, you shall have them."

But when he had gone, the girl acted in rather a curious manner. She stood a long time in the middle of the room regarding her two hands as if they had taken on a sudden interest for her. She even held them a moment to her cheek, for no apparent cause. She sat down in the chair that Livingstone had occupied, and smiled softly at the biscuit crumbs scattered on the rug.

"He's coming—often—to make reports," said she to herself. Then she went over to the piano, and played old songs of a sentimental character for quite an hour.

That evening at the "Cooper dance thing," Mr. Livingstone began his campaign of revenge. He made one of the women present him to Miss Forrester—"the red-haired Forrester person"—and devoted himself to that young lady with a warmth and assiduity that drew amused smiles from his friends, but no smiles at all from the indignant Siddons, who stood about the doorways in wrathful and puzzled gloom.

The girl, as Jimmy Rogers protested, later on, was no beauty, but he did her an injustice when he said that she was hardly pretty, for she had splendid red hair, a beautiful mouth and good shoulders which she carried well. But her eyes were ordinary and her nose turned up too much. There were freckles across its bridge.

"But altogether," said Livingstone to himself, "you wouldn't be half bad if you knew your good points, and made more of them—dressed up to them, you know. You just miss being quite effective."

As the evening went forward, and Livingstone still clung devotedly to

Miss Forrester's side—like a hungry cat waiting for meat, as the morose Siddons graphically put it to a friend—the girl's attitude toward the new situation became very interesting. She bore a heightened flush in her cheeks, a half-puzzled, half-excited sparkle in her eyes, and an air of ill-concealed triumph when she swept by the little row of wall flowers—*tapisserie*, as the polite Parisians term such beings—or passed through the doorway where lounged in solitary gloom an enraged painter called Siddons.

But toward the middle of the evening, when the two had finished their seventh waltz, the girl turned to her shadow with a little, nervous laugh, and said:

"I wish you'd tell me why you're doing it, Mr. Livingstone. Of course you've some particular reason."

"Tell you why I'm doing what?" demanded Livingstone. "I don't know what you mean."

"Yes, you do, too!" said the girl. "You know perfectly well—paying me such a lot of—of attention, and all that, so very suddenly. We've been going to the same teas and dances and things for more than a year, but you've never before even tried to meet me. What has happened?"

"Oh," said Livingstone, with great hauteur, "of course if you want me to go away, I'll——"

"No," said she, smiling, "I don't want you to go away; I only wondered. Of course you're helping me on tremendously, and I ought to be very grateful. You'll make me the fashion, you know."

Livingstone shook his head. "I don't understand at all," said he.

"Why," cried the girl, "you're such a personage, such an arbiter, hereabouts! When you wear a certain sort of top coat all the other men copy it. And when you pay marked attention to a girl it makes a social success of her at once. Don't you see?"

"Oh, rot!" said Livingstone.

"And so I wondered," she went on,

"why—why I should have risen, all at once, into your highness's favor."

"I'll tell you why," said he, "though you're quite wrong about its being 'all at once.'"

It took him about half an hour to tell it, but he would seem to have been convincing, for, at the end of the half-hour, the girl's flushed face was quite worth seeing.

"You're all—all wrong," she murmured. "I'm not at all—beautiful, but—I don't mind your thinking so. Do you really, honestly?"

Livingstone had rather an effective way of telling people that they were beautiful.

Indeed, he drew a sigh of genuine pride when the evening was over. He considered that he was making unhopec-for progress toward a complete revenge, though the girl to whom he owed his scheme treated him, when toward midnight he asked her for a dance, with what seemed to him a puzzling and undeserved coolness.

"Well, all I've got to say," repeated Jimmy Rogers, when they sat the next morning—as has been said before—under the awning of the Café d'Alençon, "all I've got to say is that it's a nasty trick, and I'm ashamed of you."

"I don't care," said Livingstone, defiantly, "and if you want to waste your shame so easily, you may. I'd reserve it, though," he added, unkindly; "you may need it. Anyhow, as I have already said, I'm beyond scruple. I'm going to have revenge if it costs me a lifetime of strenuous endeavor. A lot the thing matters to you! Nobody has gone about the Quarter cackling over your dissolute habits!"

Jimmy Rogers assumed an air of indignant virtue, but his chum only glowered at him, and ordered another *café au lait*.

They were sitting in the very rear rank of the *terrasse*, half screened by one of the columns, so that young Siddons, who, under the malevolent guidance of his evil genius, happened upon the scene just then, did not

observe them at all, but took a table almost within arm's reach, and settled back in his chair with an unpleasant growl to the waiter who approached for his order.

"Ah, Siddons!" said Livingstone, cheerily, "having an early nip? Bad habit, drinking in the morning! very bad!"

"I'm drinking coffee," said Siddons, shortly, after his first unhappy start of surprise; and tried vainly to convince the waiter, who approached with a bottle and glasses, that he had not ordered Scotch whiskey.

"Very jolly dance last night," said Livingstone, tactfully changing the subject. "Don't know when I've enjoyed a dance so much!"

The other concealed in his glass his rapture over that function.

"Didn't see you dancing much, though," continued Livingstone; "aren't giving it up, are you?"

But the overwrought Siddons rose suddenly, with something very like a curse, and muttering that he was in a great hurry, made off down the rue de Rennes.

"Queer chap!" observed Livingstone. "Didn't seem to want to talk."

No one could have wished a smoother or more satisfactory progress in any enterprise, or a sweeter revenge. Livingstone's smile grew broader and more contented day by day, while the outraged Siddons drifted about the Quarter, bearing a countenance on which bewilderment seemed to struggle with incipient madness.

To be sure, Miss Forrester's attitude toward her new admirer on their second meeting was such as to give him for a time a sinking at the heart, for she appeared on the edge of an explosion of temper. But after looking fiercely at him for some moments she became reflective, then for a time mirthful, and at last her old self—that is to say, her self of the Cooper dance—and listened with apparent interest to certain further details as to her personal appearance and general charm.

"I tell you," cried Mr. Livingstone to his fellow-conspirator at the end of a week, "I tell you the thing is going like a clock! Siddons is on the verge of insanity. Oh, but that was a brilliant scheme of yours! You shall have the Russian crown jewels."

He paused an instant, frowning, and kicked at the rug.

"I wish it didn't have to—have to let the—girl in—Miss Forrester in—it's such a low trick on her, you know!"

The girl looked up at him sharply, and set her cup of tea on the table beside her.

"I thought you were the man who'd stop at nothing!" said she.

"Well," said Livingstone, still kicking resentfully at the rug, "well, so I won't! I'll have my revenge at any cost, you know that; but—confound it all, it is rather a low trick, you know! She never did me any harm, and it's going to be rather—rather nasty for her when I cut off going there all at once—not," he hastened to add, "not that she'd give a rap so far as I'm personally concerned, but there's the look of the thing. No, I'm not quite comfortable about her."

The girl shook her head with a little sigh.

"I told you once," said she, "that Alice Forrester quite deserved her part of it, but I suppose there's no convincing you. She's a shallow, heartless little cat, who would do anyone a bad turn if she liked. Indeed, they tell me she's quite insufferable since you've taken her up. If you'd any eyes at all you'd see that instead of harming her you're simply making the girl's fortune, as it were. Haven't you noticed that she's had a lot of men following her about during the past week?"

"Y-e-es—oh, yes!" admitted Livingstone.

"Well, you did it," said the girl. "I tell you you've made her social fortune."

Livingstone shook a puzzled head.

"That's what she told me the other day," said he, "but of course it's all

rot! Fancy my making anybody's social fortune!"

"By the way," inquired the girl, "were those red frocks your idea?"

"They were!" declared Livingstone, proudly. "She asked me what color I fancied most for red-haired women, and I said red, crimson. Why people with red hair think they must go about all the time in blue or brown I can't see. Wasn't that scarlet thing great she had on last night at the Van Dusers?"

"I thought it a bit sensational, myself," said the girl, coldly. "But of course, there's no accounting for tastes."

"And her hair, you know," cried Livingstone. "She asked me what I thought was the most fetching way of doing a woman's hair, and I told her I liked the way you do yours, best."

The girl was abruptly moved to mirth.

"That," said she, "was very tactful of you. What did Miss Forrester say?"

"Well, she didn't say very much, you know," admitted Livingstone. "Rather short about it, she was. But she does her hair like yours, now."

The girl moved over to the piano and sat before it, touching the keys lightly.

"I thought," said she, "that is, I understood—that you were coming here—often—to report progress and—and all that."

"Well," demanded Livingstone, "haven't I? I'm reporting progress now."

"I've seen you just once since a week ago," said the girl, playing a little song, with a foot on the soft pedal. "That is," she amended, "once here. Of course I've seen you at dances and on the street—with Miss Forrester—not to mention the Luxembourg Gallery.

"But, I say," protested the bewildered Livingstone, "how in the world can I cut Siddons out, if I don't go about with Miss Forrester? I thought that was what I was expected to do. It was your scheme, not mine."

"And I suppose," said the girl,

still intent on her song, "I suppose you're really very much bored when you are with her, regularly *ennuye*—only you don't look it."

"No, I'm not anything of the sort!" declared Livingstone, frankly. "I like her. She's a ripping nice girl. I'm not bored at all. And that reminds me," he added with a certain haste, "that I promised to drop in on her this afternoon. I must be going along."

The girl took her foot off the soft pedal with quite a jerk.

"Good-bye," said she, striking the keys cruelly. "Don't let me detain you. Good-bye!"

"Eh, what?" said Livingstone, smoothing his hat. "Oh, yes, yes; good-bye! I'll be in again soon."

"I'm seldom at home nowadays," observed the girl, with a marked absence of warmth. "Good-bye!" And she played the Tannhäuser Vorspiel three times over, with a vicious emphasis upon the *Venus motif*.

It was late, nearly seven o'clock, when Livingstone reached home that afternoon. Marcus Aurelius had sat for over an hour in the middle of the studio, eyes fixed upon the door, ears cocked anxiously at every脚步 without, and an uneasy little whine as the脚步 passed by. Jimmy Rogers, over in the corner with a pipe and a well-meaning guitar, had almost made up his mind to go out alone for dinner, when the door opened.

Livingstone tossed his hat and stick upon the divan, and kicking ill-naturedly at the astonished dog, went over to the fire, where he stood warming his hands in morose silence.

"How's the revenge?" inquired Jimmy Rogers, striking a weird chord on the guitar. "Sweet as ever?"

"No, it's not!" said Livingstone, shortly. "There's nothing sweet about it. And the next time you hear me talk about revenging myself on any one, I'll thank you to brain me with an axe." He took a pipe from the mantel-shelf, and went over

to a little table in a corner to fill it from the tobacco jar. His face was pale and haggard.

"But, I say!" gasped Jimmy Rogers, "what in—what's happened, man? What's wrong?"

"Everything is wrong!" said Livingstone, bitterly. "The whole cursed thing's wrong, if you want to know. Look here; I went around there—to the Forresters, you know—this afternoon. There were two or three chaps there before me, and they tried to sit me out—stubborn little cads! That ass Drayton was one of them. I was for going away, but Al—but Miss Forrester wouldn't have it; whispered to me over a tea-cup to wait, and managed to get them off, finally. Then when they'd gone, she—we got to talking about—things—just a plain, every-day flirtation sort of affair, you know, such as everyone goes in for, but—well, she went off the hooks a bit, and—and cried—yes, cried, if you want to know; said I was playing with her, trying to make her care when I didn't care—oh, and a lot more like that!"

"The devil!" said Jimmy Rogers, in a soft whisper.

"I tell you," cried Livingstone, stalking fiercely up and down the room, with the anxious Marcus Aurelius a pace behind, "I tell you, she made me feel a regular bounder, pretty nearly a blackguard! It was something awful!"

"But what had you been doing? What had you been saying to her?" demanded Jimmy Rogers.

"Nothing!" said Livingstone, miserably; "nothing, that is, to call out any such burst as that. We'd been flirting a bit, just as—as any two harmless people might. I'd been telling her how pretty—oh, it was nothing out of the ordinary at all. I suppose she was nervous, or unstrung, or something of the sort, and lost her grip for a moment. Jove, but it was bad, though!"

"But, *then*," cried Jimmy Rogers, anxiously, "what did you do then, when she cried?"

Livingstone knocked out his pipe, and dropped down on the divan with a tired little sigh, leaning his head on his hands.

"Then? Why, I tried to do what any chap would do, must do, under the circumstances, believing that what she said was true, that she—cared. But she wouldn't hear me, wouldn't listen. She turned hysterical and sent me away, wouldn't let me get in a word. Ah, well, I'll have to do it to-morrow."

Jimmy Rogers came over to the divan, and took his chum by the shoulders, turned his face to the light, and stared into it with frightened eyes.

"You—you mean," he whispered presently, shaking the other's shoulders, "you—you mean you're—going to—marry her—*marry her?*"

"Yes," said Livingstone, dully; "yes, I'm going to marry her, if she'll have me. It's the only thing I can do. I've done the harm, it appears, and I must pay the shot. I've made her care for me, with my cursed foolishness—though heaven knows what she has seen in me to care for—and I'm going to ask her to marry me."

He sprang to his feet again, throwing off Jimmy Rogers's hands, and took up his march back and forth across the room, followed ever by the faithful and worried Marcus Aurelius.

"I tell you," he cried, savagely, "it serves me jolly well right! I'm getting just what I deserve. I've been doing this sort of thing for years—making love to girls just for the fun of it, just because they were pretty and fresh and ingénue and impressionable, and you've been doing it, too, and so have all the silly young fools like us. How do we know what we may be doing? I say, what do we know about the things we may be leaving behind us? It's good fun to tell a pretty girl that she's beautiful, and see her grow to believe it. It's good fun to tell her that she has your heart between her hands, to break or guard; and to see her grow to believe

that. But how about it when the game's over, when you go away or she goes away? How are you going to know that she'll always forget as quickly as you will? Six times out of the dozen she will forget, but how about the other six? We've all had a bad hour now and then; you have, and so have I, when a letter, or a bit of news, or somebody's gossip has brought up something that we'd quite stopped thinking of—brought it up and showed that she hadn't stopped thinking. I tell you, it's damnable! They prate about the special hell that's waiting for the *marcheurs*, for the *rouls*, for the beasts that go about wrecking women's honor; but who says anything about the chap who meets a girl for a week and makes her care for him—tells her he loves her, stopping just short of the proposal point—and then goes on and tells another girl the same thing a week later? No, nobody says anything about a special hell for him. Everyone laughs—except the girl who's stopping awake o' nights to wait for word of him. It's damnable! Well, I've been rolled out at last. I've played the trick once too often, and I've lost. I say it serves me quite right. I'm not going to whine; I'm going to pay up."

Jimmy Rogers groaned from the divan.

"It's all rot!" he cried. "Your liver's off, or something. Do you know what I think? I think you've been had. I think you've been let in; some game's being played on you. I know that girl, and she's not at all the sort to go into hysterics and all that rot. I tell you you've been had! Now, don't you go and make an ass of yourself! Wait a bit till you're sure."

"And I tell you," said Livingstone, stubbornly, "I'm sure now. Anyhow, I'm sure that there's but one thing for me to do. Eh, what? And I shall do that one thing tomorrow. So you needn't tire yourself out with cursing at me. It won't do any good."

The following afternoon he bore a sad but determined countenance down to the rue de Lille. The maid said that mademoiselle was not at home, but that she had left word for Mr. Livingstone, that she would hope to see him at the soirée of the Cercle Américain, Quai de Conti, in the evening.

Livingstone went home like a man reprieved from the scaffold, and played about with Marcus Aurelius, to that gentleman's unspeakable delight. The afternoon ended with a beautiful fight between Marcus and the *concierge*'s cat, and Livingstone bore Jimmy Rogers off to dine at Boullant's—"for to-morrow we die," said he; "I mean to-night."

He turned up rather late at the Art Club—it's a very jolly place to give dances, the Art Club on the Quai Conti—but Miss Forrester was nowhere in sight, and Livingstone began to form wild hopes that she had decided to stop at home, or had met with a carriage accident, or something. But while he was dancing about with his fellow-conspirator, whose wrath toward him appeared to have moderated somewhat, Miss Forrester came in through the door, and Livingstone's heart sank. She was, to his surprise, accompanied by the lately disfavored Siddons, and their conversation, as they began to dance, would seem to have been of an amusing character, for Siddons, as Livingstone impolitely expressed it, brayed like one of his brethren.

Later Livingstone found her alone near one of the doors. Siddons, it would seem, had held but a brief tenure of favor. At first, when he approached, she made as if she would escape, and then halted, looking up at him with wide, half-frightened, appealing eyes, and tried to smile, but not very successfully.

"I want to talk to you," said Livingstone. "There's a lot I want to say. Can't we get away from these people, somehow?"

Now, there is a little deep alcove lying between the larger of the two dancing-rooms and the billiard-room

beyond. It is a dark alcove, and when there is a dance forward palms are set in there, and a long, comfortable divan. It answers all the purposes of a Winter garden.

They found, by chance, no one in possession of the retreat, and seized upon the divan. It seemed, once, to Livingstone, that the palms at the inner end of the alcove swayed a bit, but the girl thought not.

"What did—what did you—want?" she murmured. "I rather dreaded—meeting you, after—yesterday. I can't think what was—what was the matter with me."

Livingstone took a long breath and lifted one of the girl's hands in his. It seemed to tremble a little. The orchestra outside began playing a waltz of von Weber's.

"I—want *you*," said Livingstone. "It's a great deal to ask, isn't it? And, of course, it takes a great deal of nerve to ask it, for I know well enough that you are several thousand times too good for me; but—won't you try to forget how much too good you are, and—marry me? You might improve me, you know, in time."

"Marry you?" said the girl, very softly; "marry you? You mean—that you're—really in love with me? You honestly love me enough for that?" Her breath came very fast, and her voice shook.

"Honestly love you enough for that—and more, too," lied Livingstone, gravely.

Then the girl threw back her head and laughed. It was not a particularly gay laugh; it was rather harsh and strained, rather discordant and mirthless.

"Harry!" said the girl, without raising her voice, "Harry!"

The palms at the inner end of the retreat opened where Livingstone a few moments before had seen them quiver, and young Siddons came out.

"Now," said Miss Forrester to Livingstone, who sat frowning perplexedly beside her, "now I'm going to tell you a few things, and, I hope, give you a somewhat bad quarter of an

hour." She still maintained her unpleasant little laugh. "You thought it would be a fine thing," said she, "to play a joke on Mr. Siddons in return for the joke he played on you. You thought it would be a fine thing to—to cut him out with me; I believe that was your expression—'cut him out.' So you set to work, quite regardless of my feelings in the matter, to make me care for you. You showed me a great deal of attention; you kept beside me at dances and teas; you told me what, I presume, you tell every girl you know, that I was—beautiful. Oh, you made a very complete thing of it! And you actually thought I would be stupid enough to believe you, to be taken in by you. *Grand merci, monsieur, vous me faites trop d'honneur!* No, no; wait till I've finished. So I led you along, smiled behind my hand at your absurdities, got up a bit of histrionic effect for you yesterday." She paused again, and laughed. "I arranged this little meeting for to-night. I frightened you to the point of proposal, did I? Dear me! Well, here's your answer, Mr. Livingstone."

She rose to her feet and moved over to where young Siddons stood among the palms. Livingstone rose also, and faced them. He wished that idiotic orchestra outside would stop playing von Weber's waltz. It made the thing so like a play—a rather overstrained, nasty bit of a play.

The girl put out her hand and touched young Siddons's arm. She looked contemptuously at Mr. Livingstone.

"And you thought," she said, slowly, "you thought that you could cut this man out—you! I wonder if there is another man in Paris so conceited. I regret very much to say, Mr. Livingstone, that I cannot listen to your offer of marriage. I have been for some weeks engaged to be married to Mr. Siddons."

Young Siddons had been for a long time endeavoring to combine a glare of indignant and intimidating rebuke with a beaming smirk of infinite triumph. The result would have sur-

prised and discouraged him could he have seen it in a glass. But at Miss Forrester's words his countenance froze into a mask of amazed horror, so awful that Livingstone, in the very midst of his own troubles, was forced to gasp and choke and turn his eyes away.

"One thing more, Mr. Livingstone," said the girl, coldly; "a bit of advice. The next time you set out on one of your charming little enterprises, don't talk it over on the *terrasse* of a *café*; or, if you do, look about you first to be sure you aren't overheard. That's all, I think."

Then Livingstone bowed low and humbly.

"There seems to be nothing left for me to say," he made answer. "Of course, I deserve all this—and more; though, upon my honor, I was perfectly serious in asking you to marry me. Yes, I deserve it, and I'm generous enough to acknowledge that Siddons deserves it, too—all he's getting! You don't mind if I congratulate you, Siddons, do you?"

He seized on the victorious Siddons's hand, and, avoiding that gentleman's outraged eye, pumped it cordially up and down. Then he bowed again, and left them to their happiness.

He hunted up Jimmy Rogers, and bore him, protesting piteously, out into the night and away from the Quai de Conti. They went up the rue Bonaparte and through the Place St.-Ger-

main-des-Prés, and settled down at last under the awning of the *Café des Deux Magots*. Then Livingstone told his chum everything that had happened.

"And I'm quite certain," he concluded, "that she hadn't been engaged to Siddons at all, and equally certain that Siddons did not want to be engaged to her. You should have seen his face! Ah, well! she must have been considerably in love with him."

"Now, what I want to know," said Jimmy Rogers, after a long pause devoted to thought and head-shakings, "what I want to know is, did she turn you down because she was in love with Siddons, or for sheer pique?"

"Eh, what?" demanded the mystified Livingstone. "I don't follow."

"Did she turn you down," repeated Jimmy Rogers, "because she was in love with Siddons, or because she knew you weren't in love with her? Eh?"

Livingstone shook his head. "Well, she turned me down, anyhow," he ventured, positively.

"Yes," said Jimmy Rogers; "yes, she turned you down."

"And I deserved it," continued his chum.

"Yes," agreed Jimmy Rogers; "you deserved it."

"And Siddons deserved it, too," concluded Livingstone, with a grin of recollection.



WHICH ?

OLD Sol is a changeable lover, they say,
And ne'er to be trusted, I fear.
His burning caresses, so charming to-day,
May to-morrow provoke but a tear.
And Phyllis, asleep in the hammock—so fair,
Will she love most, or chide, when he goes,
For the kiss he imprints on her red-golden hair,
Or the freckles he leaves on her nose?

GERTRUDE COLLAMER.

MARQUISE AND WOMAN

AN INCIDENT DURING THE REIGN OF TERROR

By Claude Askew

SCENE—*A small room leading out of the Salle des Morts, in the Conciergerie.* Seated in an elbow-chair, LUCIE, Marquise de Trevaille; standing up in front of her, HENRI, Comte d'Alvers. Through the half-opened door leading to the Salle des Morts come the murmur of voices and bursts of frantic sobbing.

LUCIE—So, monsieur, as we have about half an hour to await the arrival of Citoyen Sansom and the tumbrels, oblige me by telling me how the condemned are amusing themselves in the Salle des Morts. Pass the time for me—distract me. I fled from the babel in the *salle* to this small chamber, for it promised solitude; but I find it is bad to wait alone for death—one gets frightened. After a moment I would have returned to the *salle*; but, imagine it, my legs trembled so that it was impossible for me to leave my chair.

HENRI (*looking hard at her*)—But when Sansom comes you will take my arm, madame, and walk firmly and bravely to meet him; is it not so?

LUCIE—We shall see. But tell me what they are all doing in the *salle*. Talk to me; let me get my courage back; don't let me think what the moments are bringing me. You understand, it is not that I fear to die; it is the horror of the public death that daunts me. Fancy the crash of heads into the basket, the long torture of the terrible ride in the cart, the jeers of the mob! Shall I ever have courage to stumble up the scaffold staircase?

HENRI—We will not think of all

this. Madame will have the courage of her race. Come, let us talk of our friends in the *salle*; I left the good sisters on their knees, praying—let us hope—for their fellow sufferers; their own souls must be white enough. A pretty young woman, some little *citoyenne*, to judge from her dress, had sunk fainting to the ground. Two or three very inconsiderate persons were trying to restore the poor child to consciousness—a mistake, under the circumstances, you will admit. Mademoiselle d'Aigullion holds her court, as usual. She will coquette with her lovers till the knife severs her beautiful neck. Just now the rivals were quarreling over who should have the honor of sitting next her in the fatal cart; Monsieur and Madame de Florentin were clasped tightly in each other's arms, each trying to comfort and console the other.

LUCIE—Ah, they were ever devoted! That reminds me—my husband?

HENRI (*very sarcastically*)—Monsieur le Marquis de Trevaille was seated, with great composure, at a small card-table; as I passed him he expressed a wish that Citoyen Sansom would not make his appearance before he had finished and won his last game of *écarté*.

LUCIE (*bitterly*)—So it is with the cards he spends his last moments! Well, I can face this hour alone.

HENRI (*in a very low voice*)—Not alone—I have come.

LUCIE (*flushing hotly*)—Thou!

HENRI (*very softly*)—How many years is it since Lucie called me “thou.”

LUCIE (*coldly*)—You have no right to address me as Lucie.

HENRI—When Madame la Marquise de Trevaille blushed like Lucie I forgot that she was ice and snow, and presumed to remember—days it were best to forget.

LUCIE (*rising from her chair and crossing to fireplace*)—To remember those days is an insult. I beg monsieur's pardon; perhaps his amours have been exaggerated—but I have heard many stories.

HENRI—And all the stories have doubtless had a certain amount of truth in them; I have kissed a great many women in my time. Do I deny it, madame? But I have loved only one, Lucie. Do I intrude? Shall I return to the Salle des Morts? I hoped to have been allowed to remain with you till the end. I am aware that my reputation is not of the best, that the dissolute spendthrift Henri d'Alvers has little in common with the proud and cold Marquise de Trevaille; still—

LUCIE (*a break in her voice*)—Well, monsieur?

HENRI (*very earnestly*)—Death is a great leveler. Can it not restore me, Lucie? Can it not raise me from what I am to what I was? Am I to leave you?

LUCIE (*coming forward and speaking very slowly*)—You will stay with me—to the end—to the very end.

HENRI—Shall I stay with Lucie—or Madame la Marquise?

LUCIE—You will stay with madame la—oh, no; now that our hours are numbered, let us be ourselves at the last. You will stay with—Lucie.

HENRI (*taking her outstretched hands and dropping them*)—Why have you shrunk from me all these years, as though I had the plague; avoided me, hated me, treated me as the dirt beneath your feet; greeted me, since your marriage day, with chilling hauteur and cold disdain?

LUCIE—When a young girl has loved a young man with her whole heart, monsieur, when her people marry that young girl to a neglectful husband of

fifty-six, it is a woman's sole defense sometimes to appear ice—mark you, I say *appear*.

HENRI—Then the cold statue had some feeling, after all; the calm, disdainful woman some memories; the heartless, a heart!

LUCIE—In my turn, reproaches! How could you fix your mocking eyes on me at the court when I stood there helpless, alone; repeat gay stories of my husband's life, even in my hearing; cut me to the quick with your sneering taunts; make a jest of my constancy to an inconstant husband; openly insult the love you once professed for me by your devotion to women whose names were by-words; dare to come to my side, whispering the speeches you had no right to utter?

HENRI—Badinage of the court—light coin! Perhaps I was mad enough to fancy you had grown to care for that monster, your husband; perhaps I hated you for that reason, and because you seemed to have forgotten the past so easily; believe me, Lucie, I never guessed, never suspected; you were always so cold!

LUCIE—But all this is no excuse for the pain and humiliation you heaped on me—no vindication!

HENRI (*puts his hands on her shoulders and draws her gently toward him*)—I loved you! Now do you understand?

LUCIE (*releases herself from his grasp and crosses the room*)—Hush, hush—I may not—I dare not listen.

HENRI (*following her*)—And why not, Lucie? Does not death dissolve all human ties? You are no longer the Marquise de Trevaille—you are Lucie, the condemned, your moments numbered, these last few seconds mine.

LUCIE—It is true—all these years I have been a faithful wife to monsieur le marquis, and no word or sign has betrayed my secret. Surely I can speak now, now that I am so near to death. Listen, Henri! All my life I have loved thee, but for my woman's honor I have feigned to hate thee. There is no shame now in telling thee that I love thee.

HENRI (*takes her hands and kisses them*)—At last, Lucie, at last!

LUCIE—How good God is, *mon ami!* See you, we have had great sorrow, we have each misunderstood the other, been miserable and unsatisfied; I have found virtue a cold handmaid, thou hast found vice a tiring playfellow; and yet we must have gone on with these good friends till we grew gray-headed.

HENRI—You mean that it needed the shadow of death to—

LUCIE—Exactly. (*They cling together, and she hides her face on his shoulder. Suddenly a clock strikes the hour eleven; a stir is heard in the Salle des Morts.*)

HENRI (*leading LUCIE to her chair*)—It is life that would be terrible now, is it not? The life of repression for thee and vice for me; so thou art not afraid—the hour is very near, very near, Lucie. When we enter the cart close thine eyes and lean against me—I will whisper thy name as we drive along; so thou wilt not listen to the cruel mob, *chérie*. Going up those steps, my heart will tread them with thee—and then—there will be no pain, *m'amie*—a chill touch, no more. Thou wilt not be afraid?

LUCIE—Afraid? Of what should I be afraid? We shall be together, Henri, forever!

HENRI (*kneeling by her side*)—If death means life, yes; but if the meaning of death is finality—dost thou fear that, my Lucie?

LUCIE—Those who have suffered never dread sleep, Henri; so again—I fear nothing.

HENRI (*dreamily, stroking her hair*)—I see again the old château, the sunlit terrace; Lucie in her white dress; I can smell the roses. The glory of youth is over all—and I am at the feet of Lucie. Ah, those Summer days!

LUCIE—How very short our Summer days were, Henri! How very long and chill the Winter that followed!

HENRI—Is it not good to think, *m'amie*, that madame la marquise and monsieur le comte exist no longer? A

man and a woman have stepped into their place, a man and a woman who love each other with a deeper passion than Henri or Lucie ever dreamed of, love with an ardor that defies and conquers death. Is it not so?

LUCIE—Every cold word the Marquise de Trevalle gave thee, Lucie the woman takes back now. See, I will kiss thee, and thou wilt understand. Did Lucie kiss so?

HENRI—I forgive God for parting us on earth, now that this kiss weds us to the eternal future. (*They bend forward. As their lips meet, a great uproar arises in the Salle des Morts.*)

HENRI (*rising to his feet and listening*)—That cry means the arrival of Sansom and his crew. Courage, my Lucie; in a moment they will enter this room. Oh, that I could die for thee!

LUCIE (*smiling*)—And leave me alone? That would be very cruel, Henri!

HENRI (*clasping his arms around her*)—Till they enter, rest in my arms—so. Our spirits are wed, and our hearts throb to the same beat. Lucie, why tremble?

LUCIE—If I tremble, it is with joy. (*A long pause. Suddenly loud shouts are heard in the Salle des Morts and a continued uproar.*)

HENRI—That shout cannot mean the arrival of Sansom. Can the condemned be revolting? Impossible, they are unarmed. Lucie, I must find out what is happening. Oh, terrible thought! the mob may be butchering the prisoners. If so, God help me to a weapon; my hand only shall—I leave thee for a second, *m'amie*, to rejoin thee forever. (*He hurries into the Salle des Morts; LUCIE sits erect for a moment, then crouches back in the chair. The shouting increases.*)

LUCIE—This horrible faintness! this trembling! Why should the body fear death in which the spirit exults? If Henri does not return quickly, I shall die of terror. I am brave when he is with me. Those terrible shouts! Can it be possible that they are murdering the condemned—murdering Henri? My God, support me! Has Sansom

arrived? Are they binding Henri, preventing his return to me, taking him to the scaffold alone? (*Her voice rises in a scream.*) Alone? alone? Henri! (*A pause. She rises to her feet and listens. The uproar is deafening.*) My God, he will never return! They are taking him away from me—taking him to die! Oh, but I must follow him quickly. I neither tremble nor faint. I can walk bravely alone, seeking Henri. (*She runs to the door. Before she can reach it HENRI enters, his face very white and resolved.* LUCIE holds open her arms, but he takes her by the hand and leads her back to her seat. Averting his eyes from her face, he stands behind her chair after she has sunk down in it. *There is a moment's pause.*)

LUCIE—I love thee so much, Henri, that love gave me courage to seek thee. I thought cruel Sansom had taken thee from me. Without a tremble I would have mounted the scaffold—and—they will seek us in a little moment, will they not? Hold me in thine arms till they come.

HENRI (*speaking in a strange, low voice*)—Citoyen Sansom will never come for us. The tyrant, Robespierre, was arrested half an hour ago. The reign of terror is over. The shouts we heard were shouts of triumph, not despair. (*He folds his arms and looks straight in front of him.*)

LUCIE (*pressing her hands to her fore-*

head)—I do not understand—I—I fail to see.

HENRI—Monsieur le Marquis de Trevaille desired me to inform his wife that his congratulations are hers on this escape from the scaffold; he awaits her in the Salle des Morts; he has just finished and won his game of écarté; he hopes that the excitement of the last half hour has not discomposed madame. You understand now?

LUCIE (*speaking very slowly*)—Yes, I understand now—it is not difficult. (*A long pause. LUCIE sits quite still in her chair; her lips quiver.* HENRI walks restlessly up and down; at last he stops in front of LUCIE and looks into her face.) Will you kindly conduct me to my husband, monsieur?

HENRI (*passionately*)—Is it Lucie who speaks?

LUCIE (*rising from her chair and coming forward*)—No, monsieur; it is the wife of the Marquis de Trevaille. (*They look at each other for a moment, silently.* HENRI draws close to LUCIE; she looks at him steadily.)

HENRI—And what does it all mean?

LUCIE (*with a sudden burst of passion and despair*)—Mean? Why, it means, Henri, that we made a mistake when we called the good God merciful. Your arm, monsieur. (*He offers his arm, they cross the room in silence, and pass out through the door that opens into the Salle des Morts.*)

A MERRY GAME

BETTY and Belinda Ames
Had the pleasantest of games;
'Twas to hide from one another
Marmaduke, their baby brother.

Once, Belinda, little love,
Hid the baby in the stove;
Such a joke! for little Bet
Hasn't found the baby yet!

CAROLYN WELLS.

IN THE DAYS OF OUR EGOTISM

By Douglas Story

IT was a glorious July evening, balmy and breathable—a boon devoutly cherished after the baked June nights of a fortnight before—and the broad piazza was a very pleasant place in the starlight. Dimly, against the warmer light from the windows, were silhouetted two figures of women, with the grotesque outline of a wicker coffee-table between them.

Where both were so young it smacks of sacrilege to advertise that she of the high-bridged nose, the full throat and the Ellen Terry chin was by eighteen months the elder, and, by a husband, an establishment and a housekeeping book, the person of greater importance. Mrs. Gwyn-Williams was happy with the consciousness of good works, but anxious with the knowledge of an unfulfilled ambition. She looked across at the innocent cause of her perturbation, as she lay swathed in the soft comfort of cushions, and sighed.

Laura looked up, and remarked:

"Really, dear, it wasn't so bad."

"What wasn't, Laura?" demanded Mrs. Gwyn-Williams in vivid surprise. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Why, the burned meringue, of course. What else have you to sigh for?"

"Good gracious, do you think I carry my cook's sins of omission and commission around with me as a penance? Sufficient unto the dinner is the evil thereof—moreover, the meringue wasn't burned—it was only seasoned."

"Somewhat inclement, wasn't it?"

But Mrs. Gwyn-Williams was serious, and pursued her sentence.

"I was sighing because of the futility—pardon my—what do you call it? bibliography? — the futility of casting pearls before swine."

"Heavens, Eva, what an expression! That comes of hiding yourself in these bucolic surroundings. You'll be talking fertilizers and dreaming cattle mushes next!"

Truth to tell, the bucolic surroundings comprised a very desirable neighborhood on the Sound, with a foreground of rich lawn dappled with oak trees, a middle distance of softly lapping wavelets and a background of great waters set in the spangled distance of the opposing shore. Here and there, to the right and left, might be seen the twinkling lights of near-by villas. It was pastoral, if you will, but not bucolic. Had Laura Van Ryn's world been less strictly bounded on the south by a busy, mysterious down-town, on the north by a cheap and questionable up-town, and on the east and west by impenetrable morasses of undesirable avenues, she would more readily have recognized the distinction. As it was, she was called back to practical politics by the despairing query of her hostess.

"Laura, why don't you marry Archie Armstrong?"

Had the light been stronger, Mrs. Gwyn-Williams might have detected a faint flush on the girl's fair skin. As it was, she only heard her reply.

"For many reasons; one among them, that he has never asked me."

"Of course he hasn't asked you.

What man is going to risk dissection with your sharp tongue, Laura? Archie is a good fellow, and a man. He's rich enough to satisfy even your requirements and he's madly in love with you."

"Has he told you so?"

"Why, he tells the whole world every time his eyes fall on you." Then, with a little gesture of appeal: "Oh, Laura, why don't you let your real nature appear sometimes? What is the good of a soul if you keep it always at the bottom of a well? Let it come to the surface once in a while and warm all of us with its humanity. I know something of the love you are capable of—the passion. Cannot you put it in the safe-keeping of a gentleman like Archie?"

"O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal'; but—Mr. Armstrong can never sound it."

"Well, Laura, if you must quote *Rosalind*, I could supply you with many apter and truer sayings. Archie's no fool, and I'm sadly mistaken if he could not sound both of us to the very depths of our beings."

"How long have I been here—ten days? Well, in all that time he has never for a moment been anything but the happy, healthy man-animal he has always been. He hasn't a scrap of sentiment in his nature. If he married just now, he would marry because he was satisfied that marriage was the proper state for him, with a great resolution to live up to his vows, to dress his wife well and to deck her with jewels. But love her? He is of the twentieth century, and I must have a man with some of the primitive emotions, Eva, even if they are accompanied by certain medieval inconveniences."

"A Scotsman, and not sentimental? Oh, Laura!"

"Mr. Armstrong's not a Scotsman. He was born in West Thirty-seventh street. I know the house."

"And were his grandfather and his great-grandfather and his greater

grandfathers of the twentieth generation born in West Thirty-seventh street?"

Before Miss Van Ryn could reply the men came out through the French window to the piazza; two tall, strong figures, in conventional evening dress. The light gushed out as though liberated from a prison, disclosing a vignette of the girl whom Rembrandt Hermanzoon himself would have loved well to paint. She was young, not more than twenty-three, with a patrician face of a perfect complexion backed by great coils of russety red; her eyes in the daytime were of a deep violet; now they were black, fringed with long dark lashes that curled over to her cheek as she closed them in the sudden glare. Rembrandt would have painted her as he saw her now, with her round, white throat and upper bosom thrown into the light and the austere blackness of her mourning softened into the shadow. Archie gazed down at her, as a monk of the middle ages might have looked on a manifestation of the Madonna, in adoration.

But the chord had not yet been struck that would find those two in harmony, and Eva sought her husband's face in troubled perplexity. He, good soul, was full of the peace of an excellent dinner and a satisfying cigar, and did not notice his wife's preoccupation. Then the curtains swung back over the music-room window, and they four were left alone with the stars and the Summer night's secrets. Eva's hand stretched out to her husband's in the darkness, and thus for a time they sat in silence. With their silence came the sound of shrill crickets tuning a clear soprano to the mellowed bass of distant bull-frogs, supported by the dreamy accompaniment of the waves on the shingle. Just then the full moon rose from behind the blackness of the other shore, clear, silvery, new-minted, and pushed out a lambent gangway to the verge of the lawn beneath them.

It was then Mrs. Gwyn-Williams had her inspiration.

She knew her guests better than they knew themselves, and it was her duty, so she argued, to bring them permanently together. But she was a diplomat, and she realized that only a very subtle influence could succeed over natures so sensitive, so suspicious, as those of Archie and Laura.

They had gazed spellbound for some minutes at the glorious mystery of the moon, when Archie said, very quietly, as though afraid to disturb it, "Won't you play us something, Mrs. Gwyn-Williams?" Eva gave her husband's hand a little squeeze and they went in together to the music-room. Their marriage was not yet sufficiently archaic to cause Frank regret when she turned down the lights in the room, leaving only the tapers on the piano alight. They flung back the curtains from the door-window so that some of the glory of the night might reach them, and Eva began to play. Out on the piazza sat Archie and Laura, silent, receptive.

Mrs. Gwyn-Williams began with a quaint old Song of the North, a song of untamed winds wandering over bare rocks, of waves whispering tales of the sea in the hollows of caves, of seabirds crooning the records of great storms; and, as it floated out to him, the heart of Archie Armstrong stopped.

His yacht, his automobile, the very girl by his side faded from his thought. He longed to get away from the thraldom of asphalted streets and trim, machine-cut lawns. His mind traveled away to the grandeur of the great Northwest, to the splintered peaks of the Rockies, the jade-colored rivers, the tawny flanks of the mountains. It was there alone life was raised above existence.

The pianist was reveling in fierce Scots' battle-songs, pibrochs and marches. Archie decided to throw up the Reisingers' invitation to Newport and betake himself for a couple of months to the wilds of Assiniboia.

Manlike, he turned in the misery of his self-impeachment to the girl beside him. No longer would he dangle aimlessly at the beck of a convention-chilled woman of society, like a powder-box on a châtelaine. He would end it here and now.

"I'm sorry I sha'n't see you next month at Newport, Miss Van Ryn."

His voice was slow and even, caddened to the rhythm of his Fifth avenue training, but the girl recognized in it a challenge.

"No? Going stagging on a yacht?"

"I'm not." His tone was hard for a man of his breeding. "I'm going to Canada, perhaps to Alaska, perhaps to the Klondike."

"Gold fever?"

"Weariness of myself and my generation, weariness of the manicured woman and the massaged man!"

"Really, Mr. Armstrong, I must warn Eva against the indiscretions of her chef! I admit I do not myself greatly admire burned dishes, but, so far, they haven't made me tired of life."

"Life! What is life? At the Last Day you will stand before the Judge with a catalogue of your earthly doings, and what will it amount to? So many dinners, so many box-parties, a batch of dances and a cluster of cotillions, a marriage, perhaps a divorce, a be-dizened middle age and a querulous superannuation—*sic transit gloria mundi*—without love, without faith, destitute of all generosity!"

Laura was sitting bolt upright, pale and perilously awake now. This was revolution with a vengeance!—the man of whom she had demanded primitive emotions accusing her of the breach of an entire decalogue. Her voice was chill as the wind from the Mer de Glace.

"Mr. Armstrong, you forget yourself!"

"I do not. What have I to my credit?—a good palate for a cigar, a passing knowledge of whiskey and vintage champagne, a fair eye for a horse and a moderately long drive at golf. Think you that will earn me a right to a place beside the gods? If I

love, I love a creation of Worth's or of Paquin's—a thing on which to hang clothes! But, Miss Van Ryn, one virtue I do possess—the capacity for love. *I can* love and *I will* love, though I have to seek my bride under the blanket of a Sarcee. But the woman of our world, she is as incapable of receiving love as of giving it! She's bloodless, chiseled stone!"

"Mr. Armstrong, you lie!"

The word lashed out from Laura as the hoof of a skittish colt at a spiteful groom. An hour ago it would have seemed to her an impossibility, a twentieth-century blasphemy. From the music-room came the wild music of the Rakoczy march, but the girl's flamed ears heard it not. The fierce Hungarian folk songs had not penetrated beyond her tympanum.

"You lie! The women of to-day are women as they ever were, with the same wife-love, the same mother-love in them they have always had. They go through life hungering for *men*, for one man in all the crowd of well-starched, well-pressed masculine humanity in whom they can place their faith, to whom they can cleave in perfect honesty. But where is he? Can you show me in all the range of your acquaintance a man who places his wife first in his thoughts? She is not first, nor second, nor third. Wall street, his horses, his bets and his deals, his ambitions and his intrigues, all take precedence. Sooner than have my love so treated I would be a nun in a nunnery; I would slave as a nurse in a city hospital."

And then, to the embarrassment of

Armstrong, she fell forward in an agony of weeping. Mrs. Gwyn-Williams was playing soft dream things of Grieg's now, faint whispers of an aforesight. The low gurgle of the girl's sobbing came inward through the window and Frank started forward to investigate, but Eva's hand restrained him. She floated into a nocturne of Chopin's.

Outside on the piazza was a composite figure, silhouetted against the moonbeams, a man and a woman indistinguishable.

The man was saying, and his voice was rich with feeling, "Laura, child, my whole life is yours." And the girl's voice, still tremulous with weeping, returned: "I know it, my love, I know it."

When the Gwyn-Williamses emerged on the piazza, Laura turned to them with a happy laugh.

"Eva, what on earth have you been doing all this time? I thought you were going to play to us?"

Frank stuttered with surprise, but his wife broke in before him:

"Oh, I've been busy with a little psychological experiment—an inquiry into contrasting egotisms."

"Good heavens, and you've been wasting your time over that, while we've been—what *have* we been doing, Archie?"

But the moon shifted its gangway round the promontory as Laura led Eva away to confide in her a secret, and the men were left alone on the piazza, alone with the darkness and their reflections on the marvelous mechanism of woman.



SHE FRECKLED

SHE smiled at him archly, all dimpled and wise,
And said, with the wit of her sex:
"The sun hasn't ever affected my eyes,
Yet in Summer I have to wear specs."



SOME amateur pianists make one regret, not the lost chord, but the chords that did not get lost.

LE FIACRE 18,612

Par Henry de Forge

J'ÉTAIS, avec mon ami, le peintre Catusse, assis devant une table de la terrasse d'un café des grands boulevards, à regarder passer les fiacres; ils trottinaient cahin-caha sous nos yeux, bariolés de couleurs multiples, fringants ou lassés, tout neufs ou préhistoriques, voiturant des gros messieurs pressés, des amoureux en promenade, ou des familles entières empilées, sous la paternelle conduite des automédon.

Et c'était pour nous une distraction, par cette belle après-midi d'été, à cette heure oisive où l'on ne pense à rien.

Tout à coup, le silence qui régnait entre mon ami Catusse et moi fut violemment interrompu par une sorte de juron qui fit retourner les clients et trembler les petites cuillers dans nos soucoupes.

"Qu'y a-t-il?" demandai-je.

"Il y a," rugit mon ami Catusse en gesticulant, "que je le reconnais! C'est bien lui! le numéro 18,612."

"Quel 18,612?" fis-je, étonné.

"Ce fiacre, là-bas!" répondit-il en me montrant une affreuse guimbarde qui s'éloignait, tirée par un cheval étique, un véhicule sur lequel les progrès scientifiques du siècle ne semblaient pas avoir eu d'influence.

"Que t'importe, ami?" répliquai-je.

"Ce fiacre," déclara Catusse, avec solennité, "est un des plus extraordinaires souvenirs de ma vie!" et, mélancoliquement, il ajouta: "C'était vers mes vingt-trois ans, au temps de notre belle jeunesse, t'en souviens-tu? J'étais alors un des élèves les plus assidus de l'École des Beaux-Arts, une des chevelures les plus

hirsutes de Montmartre, et aussi une des bourses les moins bien garnies du Quartier-Latin. Je me trouvais cependant fêru d'amour pour la plus exquise personne qui fût au monde."

"Pardon!" insistai-je.

"Il n'y a pas de 'pardon!'" affirma mon ami Catusse; "c'était bien la plus exquise, et ce petit être charmant tenait un dix-huitième rôle au Théâtre des Variétés. Elle avait un profil grec, et tu sais que j'ai toujours adoré les profils grecs. Ses cheveux étaient d'un roux fauve admirable, et ses yeux si bleus, si bleus qu'ils semblaient violets, le soir, à la clarté mourante des réverbères! C'était, hélas! à la lueur seule des réverbères que je pouvais la contempler, étant trop pauvre pour aller entendre chaque soir le "Petit Faust," pièce dans laquelle elle jouait. Je me contentais donc de longues stations à la sortie du théâtre, pour entrevoir la belle un moment; et, de plus en plus convaincu qu'elle était charmante, je composai de son délicieux profil un aquarelle—assez réussie, ma foi!—que je lui fis tenir, avec mon cœur, dans une grande enveloppe. J'eus une réponse des plus aimables sur une petit billet mauve parfumé, et, au comble de la joie, ayant opéré le rassemblement de toute ma fortune, j'écrivis à ma jeune amie pour lui offrir solennellement le lendemain, avant la représentation, un dîner des plus délicats!"

"Mais," objectai-je encore, "je ne vois pas bien le rapport de ce que tu me racontes avec le numéro 18,612."

"Attends un peu, homme impétueux!" répondit mon ami Catusse;

"je n'en parlerai que trop tout à l'heure!"

II

"Or donc," continua-t-il, "cravaté de frais, un camélia à la boutonnière de ma redingote quasiment neuve, j'emménai la belle dîner dans un restaurant connu des boulevards.

"Le profil grec était plus grec que jamais, et moi complètement amoureux. Elle s'appelait Pomponnette et était tout à fait mignonne. Je fis, du reste, royalement les choses, et le dîner fut rempli de petits plats fins.

"Au dessert, je fis apporter quelques fruits qu'elle adorait et qui, n'étant justement pas de saison, coûtaient fort cher; mais que m'importait cette sotte question de chiffres à côté de l'infini de mon bonheur!

"Hélas! les meilleures choses n'ont qu'un temps! Pomponnette poussa tout à coup une exclamation d'angoisse. Elle m'apprit qu'elle allait être en retard pour le théâtre. Aussitôt, je me fis apporter l'addition, que je soldai sans sourciller, malgré quelques chiffres qui m'étonnèrent, et je hélai le premier fiacre venu pour conduire la jeune artiste aux Variétés.

"Ce fiacre était le numéro 18,612, un fiacre antédiluvien! Il arriva néanmoins tant bien que mal jusqu'aux boulevards, où Pomponnette me quitta, en me remerciant gentiment. Et je m'aprétais à revenir chez moi tranquillement à pied, lorsque, au moment de payer le cocher, je m'aperçus qu'il ne me restait plus que trente-cinq centimes.

"Le prix du dîner avait de beaucoup excédé mes prévisions!

"Sept sous ne suffisaient pas pour solder le prix d'une course. L'automedon me regardait impassiblement du haut de son siège, alors, ne perdant pas mon sang-froid, avec un beau geste très digne, je remontai dans la voiture, en criant bien haut:

"Je vous garde!"

"C'était parfait de garder ce fiacre, c'était même une idée admirable, mais cela n'arrangeait pas les choses. J'avais

employé pour le dîner le ban et l'arrière-ban de mes capitaux. Telle était la situation, et elle était terrible!

"J'avoue que je songeai à toi; tu habitaiss au bout de Paris, mais j'étais sûr de ton amitié et de ton état de caisse.

"'Cocher,' fis-je, superbement, 'menez-moi boulevard Saint-Marcel!'

"C'était long pour le pauvre cheval qui traînait le numéro 18,612. Il trotinait d'un air tout triste. Le cocher, rouge et gras, somnolait doucement, indifférent au fond, prévenu peut-être en ma faveur par ma bonne mine et mon camélia, espérant même un de ces pourboires fameux parmi les pourboires.

"Vers neuf heures nous arrivâmes.

"Désastre! On m'apprit que tu étais à Montélimar à enterrer une tante, ta tante Aglaé, tu te souviens? Je la maudis de tout mon cœur, cette bonne dame, qui avait trouvé moyen de mourir d'un façon si inopportune!

"Mélancoliquement je jetai mon adresse au cocher, et nous partîmes pour Montmartre, bien que je fusse certain que mes tiroirs étaient tous vides et qu'à pareille heure, dans Paris, il n'y avait plus une seule boutique de brocanteur ouverte où je pourrais vendre quelques objets.

"J'étais mal avec ma concierge pour avoir un jour brisé la sonnette de sa loge, à une heure indue de la nuit, et je n'avais, en fait de voisins, qu'une vieille dame plutôt grincheuse.

"Je montai chez moi fort anxieux. Et je me mis à fouiller de tous côtés. Mais je ne trouvai que dix centimes dans la doublure d'un de mes gilets, ce qui élevait ma fortune entière à neuf sous.

"Un volume de Sénèque se trouvait sur ma table; je lus un chapitre des écrits de ce philosophe pour me remonter un peu le moral.

"Lorsque je redescendis, le cocher eût un mauvais regard et me déclara qu'il n'avait pas encore diné; il commençait évidemment à avoir des doutes sur ma solvabilité.

"J'eus alors une idée lumineuse: celle de lui offrir chez moi un certain

morceau de pâté qui me restait, avec quelques doigts de vin vieux. Avec mes quarante-cinq centimes, je lui achèterais un peu de rhum, et le bonhomme s'adoucirait. Son cheval n'avait pas l'air de vouloir bouger.

"Effectivement, le cocher du numéro 18,612 accepta mon invitation."

III

"VOILÀ qui est nouveau!" dis-je à mon ami Catusse.

"Donc," reprit celui-ci, "mon cocher soupa. Ce fut presque charmant! Il avait quelque littérature; je crois bien même qu'au dessert je lui lus un chapitre de Sénèque. Nous causâmes politique; j'abondai dans ses vues, et le voyant mis en belle humeur par les petits verres, j'eus envie de lui tout avouer, lorsque, tout à coup, il s'écria:

"Bourgeois, où allons-nous maintenant?"

"Ce mot de 'bourgeois' me flattait un peu, mais n'arrangeait pas les choses.

"Je me fis conduire à Grenelle chez un autre ami qui ne devait pas avoir de tante à enterrer. Celui-là faisait ses vingt-huit jours comme réserviste! Nous nous trouvions donc, mon fiacre et moi, au bout de Paris à onze heures du soir, sans être plus avancés qu'auparavant. Le cocher me contemplait d'un air inquiet.

"Je songeais bien à le payer de quelqu'un de mes tableaux. Il y en avait de superbes! Mais le brave homme ne m'avait pas paru porter grand intérêt aux choses de l'art.

"Où allâmes-nous? que devînmes-nous ensuite? Je n'avais plus qu'une vague notion de ce qui se passait! Je crois bien que je tentai une dernière chance chez un mien cousin, Place des Ternes; mais ce fut en vain!

"Et, à travers les rues, l'antique guimbarde roulait, roulait toujours, presque fantastique, avec son cheval maigre et son cocher gras.

"Comme je maudis alors la jolie Pomponnette, ses yeux de faïence et

ses cheveux fauves! comme j'envoyai à tous les diables son profil grec des Batignolles!

"Par une ironie du sort, le numéro 18,612 passa vers une heure devant le Théâtre des Variétés, et j'eus le désespoir de voir ma bien-aimée sortir au bras d'un élégant jeune homme, pour monter avec lui dans un coupé fringant, un coupé près duquel mon fiacre faisait piteuse mine.

"Je me renfonçai à l'intérieur, en me cachant le visage, et, sur un nouvel ordre de moi, le numéro 18,612 quitta les boulevards pour disparaître dans la nuit.

"Il était deux heures du matin quand, de nouveau, le fiacre s'arrêta devant ma porte. Le cocher avait un sourire qui me semblait diabolique. Il me déclara qu'il serait bien aisé d'aller se reposer.

"Je pensai à l'emmener coucher chez moi, mais que serait devenu son véhicule?

"Alors, perdant tout à fait la tête, je lui criai que je le garderais toute la nuit!

"Bien, bourgeois," répondit-il, simplement; "je vais sommeiller dans ma voiture."

"C'était là une solution inespérée; gagner du temps était précieux, quoique le prix du fiacre s'augmentât sans cesse!

"Je montai me mettre au lit, le cerveau rempli de cauchemars; je voyais des séries de fiacres qui roulaient en des courses effrayantes, menés par des cochers sataniques!

"Et dans la rue déserte, devant ma porte, le numéro 18,612 stationnait, immobile; par intervalles il en sortait comme un ronflement sourd et régulier."

IV

"Et après?" demandai-je à mon ami Catusse.

"Après? Ce fut terrible! Après cette nuit de cauchemars, j'eus, au réveil, la désagréable pensée du compte qu'il me fallait régler.

"Par la fenêtre, j'aperçus mon

cocher, joyeux, épanoui par l'air frais du matin, qui causait avec mon concierge.

"Je descendis, ayant fait un paquet volumineux de quelques livres et vêtements dont j'espérais tirer un peu d'argent. Et la course reprit. J'allai de boutique en boutique, du côté des brocanteurs.

"Grâce à des prodiges de marchandise, je pus enfin, vers dix heures du matin, réunir la somme exacte de 37 francs 35 centimes en espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes!

"Je déclarai alors gravement à mon cocher que je n'avais plus besoin de ses services.

"'Bien, bourgeois!' répondit-il.

"Et voici le compte qu'il me fit:

	Francs.
De sept heures à minuit (tarif de jour).	10.00
De minuit à six heures (tarif de nuit).	18.00
De six heures à dix heures (tarif de jour)	8.00
Cinq colis à 0.25	1.25
"Au total, trente-sept francs vingt-cinq!"	

"C'était tout mon avoir, moins dix centimes.

"Je le remis au cocher, bien heureux de pouvoir payer!

"Et lorsque je lui eus ajouté les dix centimes qui constituaient tout ce que je pouvais lui donner comme pourboire, il fit une grimace amère et ne me ménagea pas les épithètes malsonnantes — et, d'ailleurs, méritées.

"Mais, généreusement, je lui glissai alors le volume de Sénèque, qui était encore dans ma poche et dont les brocanteurs n'avaient pas voulu — un fort volume in-octavo, avec une préface d'un membre de l'Institut.

"Puis, je disparus en hâte, soulagé!"

V

"Et Pomponnette?" demandai-je.

"Ce fut fini, je t'assure bien!"

Et alors, en manière de conclusion, mon ami Catusse ajouta:

"Vois-tu, l'amour, c'est très joli, mais il y a trop de frais."



WEAVING

A SOMBER web is laid upon my loom,
Where, for a little space, my hands must weave
Whatever pattern passing fate may leave
Upon the threshold of my darkened room.
No roses 'neath my trembling fingers bloom,
Loose threads and errors I cannot retrieve;
And ever with a sore despair I grieve,
For stars have never broken on my gloom.

When, at the last, my tears have ceased to flow,
When life-tides wait forever at the ebb,
And Master hands my tapestries unroll,
From pleading lips the cry will come, I know:
"Dear God, forgive! In that uneven web
There lies enmeshed a loving woman's soul!"

MYRTLE REED.



A MONG women backbiting is the sincerest form of flattery.

DYING FIRES

By Frank Norris

YOUNG Overbeck's father was editor and proprietor of the county paper in Colfax, California, and the son, so soon as his high-school days were over, made his appearance in the office as his father's assistant. So abrupt was the transition that his diploma, which was to hang over the editorial desk, had not yet returned from the framer's, while the first copy that he was called on to edit was his own commencement oration on the philosophy of Dante. He had worn a white piqué cravat and a cutaway coat on the occasion of its delivery, and the county commissioner, who was the guest of honor on the platform, had congratulated him as he handed him his sheepskin. For Overbeck was the youngest and the brightest member of his class.

Colfax was a lively town in those days. The teaming from the valley over into the mining country on the other side of the Indian River was at its height then. Colfax was the headquarters of the business, and the teamsters—after the long pull up from the Indian River Cañon—showed interest in an environment made up chiefly of saloons.

Then there were the mining camps over by Iowa Hill, the Morning Star, the Big Dipper, and further on, up in the Gold Run country, the Little Providence. There was Dutch Flat, full of Mexican-Spanish girls and "breed" girls, where the dance-halls were of equal number with the bars. There was—a little way down the line—Clipper Gap, where the mountain ranches began, and where the mountain cow-boy lived up to the traditions of his kind.

And this life, tumultuous, headstrong, vivid in color, vigorous in action, was bound together by the railroad, which not only made a single community out of all that part of the east slope of the Sierras' foothills, but contributed its own life as well—the life of oilers, engineers, switchmen, eating-house waitresses and cashiers, "lady" operators, conductors, and the like.

Of such a little world news-items are evolved—sometimes even scare-head, double-leaded descriptive articles—supplemented by interviews with sheriffs and ante-mortem statements. Good grist for a county paper; good opportunities for an unspoiled, observant, imaginative young fellow at the formative period of his life. Such was the time, such the environment, such the conditions that prevailed when young Overbeck, at the age of twenty-one, sat down to the writing of his first novel.

He completed it in five months, and, though he did not know the fact then, the novel was good. It was not great—far from it, but it was not merely clever. Somehow, by a miracle of good fortune, young Overbeck had got started right at the very beginning. He had not been influenced by a fetich of his choice till his work was a mere replica of some other writer's. He was not literary. He had not much time for books. He lived in the midst of a strenuous, eager life, a little primal even yet; a life of passions that were often elemental in their simplicity and directness. His schooling and his newspaper work—it was he who must find or ferret out the news all along the

line, from Penrhyn to Emigrant Gap—had taught him observation without—here was the miracle—dulling the edge of his sensitiveness. He saw, as those few, few people see who live close to life at the beginning of an epoch. He saw into the life and the heart beneath the life; the life and the heart of Bunt McBride, as with eight horses and much abjuration he negotiated a load of steel "stamps" up the sheer leap of the Indian Cañon; he saw into the life and into the heart of Irma Tejada, who kept case for the faro players at Dutch Flat; he saw into the life and heart of Lizzie Toby, the biscuit-shooter in the railway eating-house, and into the life and heart of "Doc" Twitchel, who had degrees from Edinburgh and Leipsic, and who, for obscure reasons, chose to look after the measles, sprains and rheumatisms of the countryside.

And, besides, there were others and still others, whom young Overbeck learned to know to the very heart's heart of them: blacksmiths, traveling pedlers, section-bosses, miners, horse-wranglers, cow-punchers, the stage-drivers, the storekeeper, the hotel-keeper, the ditch-tender, the prospector, the seamstress of the town, the postmistress, the schoolmistress, the poetess. Into the lives of these and the hearts of these young Overbeck saw, and the wonder of that sight so overpowered him that he had no thought and no care for other people's books. And he was only twenty-one! Only twenty-one, and yet he saw clearly into the great, complicated, confused human machine that clashed and jarred around him. Only twenty-one, and yet he read the enigma that men of fifty may alone hope to solve! Once in a great while this thing may happen—in such out of the way places as that country around Colfax in Placer County, California, where no outside influences have play, where books are few and misprized and the reading circle a thing unknown. From time to time such men are born, especially

along the line of cleavage where the furthest skirmish line of civilization thrusts and girds at the wilderness. A very few find their true profession before the fire is stamped out of them; of these few, fewer still have the force to make themselves heard. Of these last the majority die before they attain the faculty of making their message intelligible. Those that remain are the world's great men.

At the time when his first little book was on its initial journey to the Eastern publishing houses, Overbeck was by no means a great man. The immaturity that was yet his, the lack of knowledge of his tools, clogged his work and befogged his vision. The smooth running of the cogs and the far-darting range of vision would come in the course of the next fifteen years of unrelenting persistence. The ordering and organizing and controlling of his machine he could, with patience and by taking thought, accomplish for himself. The original impetus had come straight from the almighty gods. That impetus was young yet, feeble yet, coming down from so far it was spent by the time it reached the earth—at Colfax, California. A touch now might divert it. Judge with what care such a thing should be nursed and watched; compared with the delicacy with which it unfolds, the opening of a rosebud is an abrupt explosion. Later on, such insight, such undeveloped genius may become a tremendous world-power, a thing to split a nation in twain as the axe cleaves the block. But at twenty-one, a whisper—and it takes flight; a touch—it withers; the lifting of a finger—it is gone.

The same destiny that had allowed Overbeck to be born, and that thus far had watched over his course, must have inspired his choice, his very first choice, of a publisher, for the manuscript of "*The Vision of Bunt McBride*" went straight as a home-bound bird to the one man of all others who could understand the beginnings of genius and recognize the golden grain of truth in the chaff

of unessentials. His name was Conant, and he accepted the manuscript by telegram.

He did more than this, and one evening Overbeck stood on the steps of the post-office and opened a letter in his hand, and, looking up and off, saw the world transfigured. His chance had come. In half a year of time he had accomplished what other men—other young writers—strive for throughout the best years of their youth. He had been called to New York. Conant had offered him a minor place on his editorial staff.

Overbeck reached the great city a fortnight later, and the cutaway coat and piqué cravat—unworn since Commencement—served to fortify his courage at the first interview with the man who was to make him—so he believed—famous.

Ah, the delights, the excitement, the inspiration of that day! Let those judge who have striven toward the Great City through years of deferred hope and heart-sinkings and sacrifice daily renewed. Overbeck's feet were set in those streets whose names had become legendary to his imagination. Public buildings and public squares familiar only through the weekly prints defiled before him like a pageant, but friendly for all that, inviting, even. But the vast conglomerate life that roared by his ears, like the systole and diastole of an almighty heart, was for a moment disquieting. Soon the human resemblance faded. It became as a machine, infinitely huge, infinitely formidable. It challenged him with superb condescension.

"I must down you," he muttered, as he made his way toward Conant's, "or you will down me." He saw it clearly. There was no other alternative. The young boy in his foolish finery of a Colfax tailor's make, with no weapons but such wits as the gods had given him, was pitted against the leviathan.

There was no friend nearer than his native state on the other fringe of the continent. He was fearfully alone.

But he was twenty-one. The wits that the gods had given him were good,

and the fine fire that was within him, the radiant freshness of his nature, stirred and leaped to life at the challenge. Ah, he would win, he would win! And in his exuberance, the first dim consciousness of his power came to him. He could win, he had it in him; he began to see that now. That nameless power was his which would enable him to grip this monstrous life by the very throat, and bring it down on its knee before him to listen respectfully to what he had to say.

The interview with Conant was no less exhilarating. It was in the reception-room of the great house that it took place, and while waiting for Conant to come in, Overbeck, his heart in his mouth, recognized, in the original drawings on the walls, picture after picture, signed by famous illustrators, that he had seen reproduced in Conant's magazine.

Then Conant himself had appeared and shaken the young author's hand a long time, and had talked to him with the utmost kindness of his book, of his plans for the immediate future, of the work he would do in the editorial office and of the next novel he wished him to write.

"We'll only need you here in the mornings," said the editor, "and you can put in your afternoons on your novel. Have you anything in mind as good as 'Bunt McBride'?"

"I have a sort of notion for one," hazarded the young man; and Conant had demanded to hear it.

Stammering, embarrassed, Overbeck outlined it.

"I see, I see!" Conant commented. "Yes, there is a good story in that. Maybe Hastings will want to use it in the monthly. But we'll make a book of it, anyway, if you work it up as well as the McBride story."

And so the young fellow made his first step in New York. The very next day he began his second novel.

In the editorial office, where he spent his mornings reading proof and making up "front matter," he made the acquaintance of a middle-aged lady, named Miss Patten, who asked him to

call on her, and later on introduced him into the "set" wherein she herself moved. The set called itself the "New Bohemians," and once a week met at Miss Patten's apartment up-town. In a month's time Overbeck was a fixture in "New Bohemia."

It was made up of minor poets whose opportunity in life was the blank space on a magazine page below the end of an article; of men past their prime, who, because of an occasional story in a second-rate monthly, were considered to have "arrived"; of women who translated novels from the Italian and Hungarian; of decayed dramatists who could advance unimpeachable reasons for the non-production of their plays; of novelists whose books were declined by publishers because of professional jealousy on the part of the "readers," or whose ideas, stolen by false friends, had appeared in books that sold by the hundreds of thousands. In public the New Bohemians were fulsome in the praise of one another's productions. Did a sonnet called, perhaps, "A Cryptogram is Stella's Soul" appear in a current issue, they fell on it with eager eyes, learned it by heart and recited lines of it aloud; the conceit of the lover translating the cipher by the key of love was welcomed with transports of delight.

"Ah, one of the most exquisitely delicate allegories I've ever heard, and so true—so 'in the tone'!"

Did a certain one of the third-rate novelists, reading aloud from his unpublished manuscript, say of his heroine: "It was the native catholicity of his temperament that lent strength and depth to her innate womanliness," the phrase was snapped up on the instant.

"How he understands women!"

"Such *finesse!* More subtle than Henry James."

"Paul Bourget has gone no further," said one of the critics of New Bohemia; "our limitations are determined less by our renunciations than by our sense of proportion in our conception of ethical standards."

The set abased itself. "Wonder-

ful, ah, how pitilessly you fathom our poor human nature!" New Bohemia saw color in word effects. A poet read aloud:

"The stalwart rain!
Ah, the rush of down-toppling waters;
The torrent!
Merge of mist and musky air;
The current
Sweeps thwart by blinded sight again."

"Ah!" exclaimed one of the audience, "see, see that bright green flash!"

Thus in public. In private all was different. Walking home with one or another of the set, young Overbeck heard their confidences.

"Keppeler is a good fellow right enough, but, my goodness, he can't write verse!"

"That thing of Miss Patten's tonight! Did you ever hear anything so unconvincing, so obvious? Poor old woman!"

"I'm really sorry for Martens; awfully decent sort, but he never should try to write novels."

By rapid degrees young Overbeck caught the lingo of the third-raters. He could talk about "tendencies" and the "influence of reactions." Such and such a writer had a "sense of form," another a "feeling for word effects." He knew all about "tones" and "notes" and "philistinisms." He could tell the difference between an allegory and a simile as far as he could see them. An anti-climax was the one unforgivable sin under heaven. A mixed metaphor made him wince, and a split infinitive hurt him like a blow.

But the great word was "convincing." To say a book was convincing was to give positively the last verdict. To be "unconvincing" was to be shut out from the elect. If the New Bohemians decided that the last popular book was unconvincing, there was no appeal. The book was not to be mentioned in polite conversation.

And the author of "The Vision of Bunt McBride," as yet new to the world as the day he was born, with all his eager ambition and quick sensitiveness, thought that all this was the real thing. He had never so much as seen

literary people before. How could he know the difference? He honestly believed that New Bohemia was the true literary force of New York. He wrote home that the association with such people, thinkers, poets, philosophers, was an inspiration; that he had learned more in one week in their company than he had learned in Colfax in a whole year.

Perhaps, too, it was the flattery he received that helped to carry Overbeck off his feet. The New Bohemians made a little lion of him when "Bunt McBride" reached its modest pinnacle of popularity. They kotowed to him, and toadied to him, and fagged and tooted for him, and spoke of his book as a masterpiece. They said he had succeeded where Kipling had ignominiously failed. They said there was more harmony of prose effects in one chapter of "Bunt McBride" than in everything that Bret Harte ever wrote. They told him he was a second Stevenson—only with more refinement.

Then the women of the set, who were of those who did not write, who called themselves "mere dilettantes," but who "took an interest in young writers" and liked to influence their lives and works, began to flutter and buzz around him. They told him that they understood him; that they understood his temperament; that they could see where his forte lay; and they undertook his education.

There was in "The Vision of Bunt McBride" a certain sane and healthy animalism that hurt nobody, and that, no doubt, Overbeck, in later books, would modify. He had taken life as he found it to make his book; it was not his fault that the teamsters, biscuit-shooters and "breed" girls of the foothills were coarse in fibre. In his sincerity he could not do otherwise in his novel than paint life as he saw it. He had dealt with it honestly; he did not dab at the edge of the business; he had sent his fist straight through it.

But the New Bohemians could not abide this.

"Not so much *faroucherie*, you dear

young Lochinvar!" they said. "Art must uplift. 'Look thou not down, but up toward uses of a cup';" and they supplemented the quotation by lines from Walter Pater, and read to him from Ruskin and Matthew Arnold.

Ah, the spiritual was the great thing. We were here to make the world brighter and better for having lived in it. The passions of a waitress in a railway eating-house—how sordid the subject! Dear boy, look for the soul, strive to rise to higher planes! Tread upward; every book should leave a clean taste in the mouth, should tend to make one happier, should elevate, not debase.

So by degrees Overbeck began to see his future in a different light. He began to think that he really had succeeded where Kipling had failed; that he really was Stevenson with more refinement, and that the one and only thing lacking in his work was soul. He believed that he must strive for the spiritual, and "let the ape and tiger die." The originality and unconventionality of his little book he came to regard as crudities.

"Yes," he said one day to Miss Patten and a couple of his friends, "I have been re-reading my book of late. I can see its limitations—now. It has a lack of form; the tonality is a little false. It fails somehow to convince."

Thus the first Winter passed. In the mornings Overbeck assiduously edited copy and made up front matter on the top floor of the Conant building. In the evenings he called on Miss Patten, or some other member of the set. Once a week, up-town, he fed fat on the literary delicatessen that New Bohemia provided. In the meantime, every afternoon, from luncheon-time till dark, he toiled on his second novel, "Renunciations." The environment of "Renunciations" was a far cry from Colfax, California. It was a city-bred story, with no fresher atmosphere than that of bought flowers. Its *dramatis personae* were all of the leisure class, opera-goers, intriguers, riders of blood horses, certainly more refined than Lizzie Toby, biscuit-shooter, certainly more *spirituelle* than Irma Tejada.

case-keeper in Dog Omahone's faro joint, certainly more elegant than Bunt McBride, teamster of the Colfax Iowa Hill Freight Transportation Company.

From time to time, as the novel progressed, he read it to the dilettante women whom he knew best among the New Bohemians. They advised him as to its development, and "influenced" its outcome and dénouement.

"I think you have found your *mé-tier*, dear boy," said one of them, when "Renunciations" was nearly completed. "To portray the concrete—is it not a small achievement, sublimated journalese, nothing more? But to grasp abstractions, to analyze a woman's soul, to evoke the spiritual essence in humanity, as you have done in your ninth chapter of 'Renunciations'—that is the true function of art. *Je vous fais mes compliments.* 'Renunciations' is a *chef-d'œuvre*. Can't you see yourself what a stride you have made, how much broader your outlook has become, how much more catholic, since the days of 'Bunt McBride'?"

To be sure, Overbeck could see it. Ah, he was growing, he was expanding. He was mounting higher planes. He was more—catholic. That, of all words, was the one to express his mood. Catholic, ah, yes, he was catholic!

When "Renunciations" was finished he took the manuscript to Conant and waited a fortnight in an agony of suspense and repressed jubilation for the great man's verdict. He was all the more anxious to hear it because, every now and then, while writing the story, doubts—distressing, perplexing—had intruded. At times and all of a sudden, after days of the steadiest footing, the surest progress, the story—the whole set and trend of the affair—would seem, as it were, to escape from his control. Where once, in "Bunt McBride," he had gripped, he must now grope. What was it? He had been so sure of himself, with all the stimulus of new surroundings, the work in this second novel should have been all the easier. But the doubt would fade, and for weeks he would plough

on, till again, and all unexpectedly, he would find himself in an agony of indecision as to the outcome of some vital pivotal episode of the story. Of two methods of treatment, both equally plausible, he could not say which was the true, which the false; and he must needs take, as it were, a leap in the dark—it was either that or abandoning the story, trusting to mere luck that he would, somehow, be carried through.

A fortnight after he had delivered the manuscript to Conant he presented himself in the publisher's office.

"I was just about to send for you," said Conant. "I finished your story last week."

There was a pause. Overbeck settled himself comfortably in his chair, but his nails were cutting his palms.

"Hastings has read it, too—and well, frankly, Overbeck, we were disappointed."

"Yes?" inquired Overbeck, calmly. "H'm—that's too b-bad."

He could not hear, or at least could not understand, just what the publisher said next. Then, after a time that seemed immeasurably long, he caught the words:

"It would not do you a bit of good, my boy, to have us publish it—it would harm you. There are a good many things I would lie about, but books are not included. This 'Renunciations' of yours is—is, why, confound it, Overbeck, it's foolishness."

Overbeck went out and sat on a bench in a square near by, looking vacantly at a fountain as it rose and fell and rose again with an incessant cadenced splashing. Then he took himself home to his hall bedroom. He had brought the manuscript of his novel with him, and for a long time he sat at his table listlessly turning the leaves, confused, stupid, all but inert. The end, however, did not come suddenly. A few weeks later "Renunciations" was published, but not by Conant. It bore the imprint of an obscure firm in Boston. The covers were of limp dressed leather, olive green, and could be tied together by thongs, like a portfolio. The sale stopped

after five hundred copies had been ordered, and the real critics, those who did not belong to New Bohemia, hardly so much as noticed the book.

In the Autumn, when the third-raters had come back from their vacations, the "evenings" at Miss Patten's were resumed, and Overbeck hurried to the very first meeting. He wanted to talk it all over with them. In his chagrin and cruel disappointment he was hungry for some word of praise, of condolment. He wanted to be told again, even though he had begun to suspect many things, that he had succeeded where Kipling had failed, that he was Stevenson with more refinement.

But the New Bohemians, the same women and fakirs and half-baked minor poets who had "influenced" him and had ruined him, could hardly find time to notice him now. The guest of the evening was a new little lion who had joined the set. A symbolist versifier who wrote over the pseudonym of de la Houssaye, with black, oily hair and long white hands; him the Bohemians thronged about in crowds as before they had thronged about Overbeck. Only once did any one of them pay attention to the latter. This was the woman who had nicknamed him "Young Lochinvar." Yes, she had read "Renunciations," a capital little thing, a little thin in parts, lacking in *finesse*. He must strive for his true medium of expression, his true note. Ah, art was long! Study of the new symbolists would help him. She would beg him to read Monsieur de la Houssaye's "The Monoliths." Such subtlety, such delicious word-chords! It could not fail to inspire him.

Shouldered off, forgotten, the young fellow crept back to his little hall bedroom and sat down to think it

over. There in the dark of the night his eyes were opened, and he saw, at last, what these people had done to him; saw the Great Mistake, and that he had wasted his substance.

The golden apples, that had been his for the stretching of the hand, he had flung from him. Tricked, trapped, exploited, he had prostituted the great good thing that had been his by right divine, for the privilege of eating husks with swine. Now was the day of the mighty famine, and the starved and broken heart of him, crying out for help, found only a farrago of empty phrases.

He tried to go back; he did in very fact go back to the mountains and the cañons of the great Sierras. "He arose and went to his father," and, with such sapped and broken strength as New Bohemia had left him, strove to wrest some wreckage from the dying fire.

But the ashes were cold by now. The fire that the gods had allowed him to snatch, because he was humble and pure and clean and brave, had been stamped out beneath the feet of minor and dilettante poets, and now the gods guarded close the brands that yet remained on the altars.

They may not be violated twice, those sacred fires. Once in a lifetime the very young and the pure in heart may see the shine of them and pluck a brand from the altar's edge. But, once possessed, it must be watched with a greater vigilance than even that of the gods, for its light will live only for him who snatched it first. Only for him that shields it, even with his life, from the contact of the world does it burst into a burning and a shining light. Let once the touch of alien fingers disturb it, and there remains only a little heap of bitter ashes.



PHYSICIAN—Your heart isn't good, and you must be careful about standing up too much.

"But, good heavens, doctor, I've just bought a seat in the Stock Exchange!"

THE KING'S SWEETHEART

STANGE that I should hear them in the pauses of the dance—
 The words the gypsy told me in the meadow long ago;
 Even when the heart of me is thrilling 'neath his glance,
 Above the jest, above the song I ever hear them so.
 Little thought had I of courts, of kingly pomp and show,
 A little maid a-Maying where the frail first blossoms start,
 Who all forgot before the flowers had felt the touch of snow—
 "Never gay for long is the king's sweetheart!"

Who could tell a maid one day would come to serve a queen—
 The first of all her damosels to know her favoring?
 Why should one think ever of what may be or has been,
 When life is merry as a song we bid the jester sing?
 Wine is red and lights are bright and tender is the king,
 And surely Love who deals the wound hath balm to ease the smart.
 But strange that words so long forgot come now to burn and sting—
 "Never gay for long is the king's sweetheart!"

A king's love is a trinket, one that she shall wear who may,
 To be captured by an eyelash, to be held with jests and sighs.
 But, oh, to-morrow is so far, so near and dear to-day!
 And why through every tender oath should croak a gypsy's lies?
 Yet, methought, I saw to-day a dullness in his eyes,
 And, oh, to-day how slow his steps to where I stood apart!
 Dear God, that I might lose the words that haunt me phantom-wise—
 "Never gay for long is the king's sweetheart!"

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



A MONETARY CHOICE

"WHICH do you like better—money or nobility?"
 "Well, I love a dollar, but I worship a sovereign!"



MR. BLISS (*reading paper*)—Dearest, I see marriage licenses are only two dollars, while divorce papers cost fifty; why is it?
 MR. BLISS (*also reading*)—Worth more.

A LIE

By Owen Oliver

"COME at once.
VENNING."

I sat staring at nothing with the telegram in my hand. The summons could not be from Cicely, for she expected me in half an hour. Her brother must have sent it. So he had found out!

I had taken the risk with my eyes open. I sought his acquaintance for the very reason that he was confidential clerk to the man who held the means of my ruin. If he were a knave, I reasoned, he might help me; if he were a fool, he might enable me to help myself. He proved himself neither. So I decided to break off the acquaintance. But I went home with him one evening and met Cicely; and the world was changed.

At first I feared that he regarded me with suspicion. There were times when I even fancied that he was watching me in the interests of his employer; but gradually we became fast friends, and he had assented to the engagement readily. The previous night, however, he had thrown out some hints about my past. Why should the past rise up against me? Had I not made amends for ten years?

"Come at once." I looked dazedly at the fallen telegram. If I went I risked everything. If I stayed away I lost Cicely. The clock struck seven. I roused myself, and sent the messenger for a hansom.

Cicely opened the door as I ran up the steps. Her face was quivering, though she tried bravely not to cry.

"Cicely!" I cried, hoarsely. "My dear!" She laid her head on my shoulder with a sob. "Tell me!"

"My brother!"

I stroked her hair.

"Your brother?" He had told her, then. I clenched my hand savagely.

"An accident," she added, brokenly.

I could have laughed in my relief, though I was so fond of him.

"Poor fellow!" I said, slowly.

"Poor old fellow! How did it happen?"

"They think it was a car. He will recover, they say; but—oh, Frank!" She broke down completely. I led her into the dining-room, and sat on the sofa beside her.

"Is he here?" I inquired, when she was more composed.

"In the next room." She nodded toward the folding doors. "I had a bed put there."

"May I see him?"

"He is unconscious—stunned. The doctor says he may stay so for days."

"He will soon get all right," I assured her. She shivered.

"You don't know. I—I can't tell you."

"Is he hurt so much?" She shook her head. "Then, surely—" She took my hand and looked wistfully into my eyes.

"I think," she asked, with a catch in her voice, "you love me very much?"

"Indeed," I vowed, "I do."

"Nothing could part us, could it?" Her hand trembled in mine.

"Nothing!" There was nothing but the past. I did not mean her to know that.

"If we heard anything dreadful of each other—?" I started. Had he spoken to her, after all?

"I should not believe it of you."

"If it were—George?"

She buried her face in the sofa-cushion. I caressed her in silence till she lifted her head.

"I shall not hear anything very bad of him, Cis."

"You do not know—what I know."

"You are a woman, dear; and you are so good. You must not judge a man by your standard."

"Do you think I could judge him harshly? my only brother, who has done everything for me?" They had been left alone when she was a child. He had cared for her ever since.

"No, dear; no!"

"I owe everything to him—even you." I cannot describe the tone of her voice, or the tenderness in her eyes.

"What has he done?" She caught her breath several times before she answered.

"You know that he is confidential clerk to Mr. Randall?"

"Yes."

"People say that Mr. Randall is a just man."

"They say so. They do not know him."

"But hard?"

"Very hard."

"Is that the reason you do not like to talk of him, my kind old dear?"

"Yes," I assented.

"If you were in his power—" I looked at her swiftly—"which, of course, you are not—"

"Of course not." He had not succeeded in tracking me—as yet.

She hesitated while the clock ticked out fifty, or it may have been a hundred. Then:

"George is."

"No!" I cried, in horror.

"George told you—" her thin fingers played restlessly with the table-cover—"that he was in money difficulties, when you first knew him."

"He has come out all right," I said, positively. He had repaid the money that I lent him.

"He told me so." She sighed. "It was like him to keep all the worry from me."

"Was he worrying about anything? Did you ask him?"

"Yes. He denied it; but I knew. Also—" She stopped, suddenly.

"You have other reasons." Her hand trembled on the table.

"I—I have always been so proud of him—so very proud. Don't look at me, please!"

"My poor little girl!"

"This morning he sent me a strange letter from his office." She handed it to me.

DEAR OLD CIS:

I am going abroad at once, and don't know how long I shall be away. I have some things ready at the office. Don't worry if you shouldn't hear from me for a little while. Frank will look after you. I inclose a couple of £10 notes to go on with.

Best love,

GEORGE.

"Business, probably," I muttered, with a slight frown.

"You don't think so," she said, quickly. I shrugged my shoulders. He was a trifle wild.

"Well—say an escapade." She looked straight at me.

"I found this in his pocket-book." She handed me forty-eight £10 notes folded in a business memorandum addressed to Randall.

Herewith £500 (50 notes of £10) in settlement of account. Please send receipt by bearer.

WALKER & CO.,

Per R. N.

I laid the notes down with a groan. George a thief! I could not believe my senses.

"The numbers of the notes he sent me follow these," she said, huskily. "I suppose he has kept the others. He—oh, my poor boy! My poor boy!" I stared at her helplessly. "Speak to me, Frank. Say something!" I could not control my voice to speak, but I drew her to me and held her.

"I had such faith in him," she said, piteously. "Now there is only you. I sha'n't find out anything about you, shall I?"

"No, dear," I said, "no." She smiled through her tears.

"I know you have never done anything bad—not really bad."

"Not really bad," I echoed. At any rate, I had never done mean or wilful wrong.

"I want your help," she pleaded.

"I will make good the missing notes, of course."

"Thank you, dear." She pressed my hand. "I would offer to repay you; but money matters so little between us."

"So very little."

She smiled up at me. "I will send them all back to-night."

"No, no!" she cried, eagerly. "You must take them. The letter speaks of the 'bearer.'"

I got up and paced the room. Take them! I!

"Possibly Randall can identify them by the numbers. He may have received them and given the receipt himself, and then George—" I hesitated. She shook her head.

"George always does that."

"He may ask awkward questions, if I go."

"If he knows enough to ask questions, he knows enough to suspect George. You could influence him. You are so clever and quick! Please, Frank, for my sake!" I shook my head. Her lips quivered. "If you fail me—"

"I will go," I said, "unless I can find a way that seems better. I must think it out by myself."

"God bless you, sweetheart!" she almost prayed. "I knew I could trust you."

Then I went. It was a cold Autumn night; but I wiped the sweat from my brow as I walked along.

II

THE horns of Noman Crescent are in the city; the hollow of it seems out of the world. No. 37 is in the centre of the dip, and Randall's offices are on the first floor. At the back some slums have been pulled down, and the alley running alongside No.

37 is deserted and unlighted. It would be an easy place to enter from the back, I had decided before I met Cicely. Then I abandoned the idea. It would have been no robbery for me to take from Randall; but I came to dislike even the name of evil, when I knew Cicely.

I went down the gloomy alley, and climbed over the wall into a ruined house. I heard footsteps in the crescent, and crouched behind a pile of musty bricks. The sounds ceased, and I came out. I started at a stray cat, and jumped back from my own shadow. Then I set my lips resolutely, and climbed over into the little courtyard.

Some broken stone steps led up to the back door. It was locked; but by standing on the railing I could reach the end of the window-sill with one foot. A brick had fallen out of the wall, leaving a hold for one hand. After a few moments' balancing I got on the sill. I pressed against the corner of a pane of glass till it yielded, gashing my hand. Then I unfastened the window, opened it, and crawled in. When I had bound up my hand, I felt my way slowly among the desks and chairs, through the open door into the next room, and from there into the corridor.

I listened at the door of Randall's room in case he should be staying late, though there was no light in the front. Hearing nothing, I turned the knob and went in. The Venetian blinds admitted enough light to disclose the two desks. He usually sat at the nearer one, I knew. So I laid the notes on the desk under the window, where he might think he had overlooked them. Then I turned to go. The clock on the mantel struck half-past eight.

"By nine," I thought, "I shall be telling little Cis. What will she say?"

She would blame me, I feared, but—I shrugged my shoulders. She might have known so much more. She might know yet; the documents that recorded my youthful

errors—some would call them crimes—were in the little inner room, probably. Could I secure them now? I tried the door. It was unlocked. I went in.

The room was in darkness. I went over to the window to let in the rays of the street-lamp; and suddenly the place was ablaze with electric light. I turned sharply round. My enemy was seated at the table, pointing a revolver at my head.

"Put up your hands," he said, quietly. I put them up. "Sit there." He indicated a chair opposite to him. "Draw back a little. I don't wish you too close." I drew back. He laughed a soft, sneering laugh.

"Well?" I asked. He laughed again.

"I was coming back here," he explained, "when I saw you go down the alley. I thought you would honor me with a visit."

"If you had been in my place——"

"I should have managed better. You never had any sense, Melville." That was my name—in Australia.

"If I had had, I should have had nothing to do with you, you villain!" He showed his big, uneven teeth in an animal grin.

"Between ourselves, my dear Melville, I am a villain."

"You cheated me, robbed me, made me desperate——"

"Now you mention it, I fancy I did." He chuckled.

"When I took back a little of what you had stolen from me, what else could you expect?"

"I expected nothing else," he said, grimly. "So I took care that you would have to leave evidence behind you."

"No one who knew the whole story would condemn me," I said. But he interrupted, smilingly: "No one has the means of knowing." I had no proofs of the wrongs he had done me. We sat in silence for a few minutes.

"I have been honest for ten years," I began, feebly.

"And prospered accordingly?" he sneered.

"I have prospered—in a small way."

"I am glad to hear of it."

"I will give you two thousand pounds," I offered, desperately. He laughed aloud.

"Four thousand, then. It is all I have." He pushed back his shaggy black hair and looked at me with blazing eyes.

"Give me my brother!" he hissed. "Murderer!" His hand trembled for a moment. I gathered myself for a spring; but his tremor had passed.

"It was a fair fight."

"Call it what you like—the law will call it murder."

"He forced the quarrel. After he and his fellow-ruffians—" He made an inarticulate sound that was neither a cry nor a laugh. "He fired first and shot me in the arm. I——"

"Silence!" he snarled. "Let me think." His face contorted several times, but he said nothing.

"Why," I asked at length, "do you hesitate?" His eyes glistened.

"It is good to watch you," he said, fiercely.

"Still a bully!"

"I have the choice of two pleasures. I can shoot you——"

"Shoot me!" I laughed, hoarsely. It was possibly the best thing that could happen.

"Or I can hand you over to the police." He sneered again. "I think my brother would prefer me to hand you over to the police."

"Do it, then." If he called I would chance one shot from him. He could not fire a second, if he missed.

"I might even manage both," he said, thoughtfully. His finger seemed quivering on the trigger. I turned my eyes away. They rested on the cord of his table-lamp, hanging down to the floor. If I could put out the light? I hooked the wire violently with my foot, swept the lamp from the table, and dropped on my hands and knees. With a crash the light went out. He fired a shot—it passed through the window. I seized the table and dashed it against him. Both he and the chair went over. I

rushed through the door, locked him in, and climbed out the way I had come.

There were footsteps and shouting in the streets, and a policeman's whistle afar. Randall was calling to them from the window to guard the alley.

"He is a desperate man!" he cried. "A murderer—and worse!"

I stumbled through the empty houses into the back yards of some tenements. A door was open. I went in. Some women and a drunken man were quarreling in the passage; but they took no notice of me. I let myself out of the front door into the street. In a few seconds I was on the top of an omnibus. At Holborn I got off and took a hansom to Cicely's house.

I had escaped. The fear of Randall worried me no more. My only trouble was that I must lie to her. For if ever a man honored a woman, since there were women for men to love, I loved and honored Cicely Venn.

III

CICELY started back with a cry when she saw my disordered dress and wounded hand.

"Frank! You are hurt?"

"It is nothing." I sank into a chair; and she stood beside me, with her hand on my shoulder.

"You—you have seen him?"

"I have seen him." I did not look at her; but I felt her hand quiver.

"He will spare my brother? Surely he will spare him!"

"He can do nothing to your brother."

"Frank! What have you done?" I took her hand in mine.

"I know enough of Randall," I said, slowly, "to be quite sure that he would prosecute George relentlessly, if he knew. Therefore, he must not know."

"You shall not take the blame." I put my hand gently on her lips. She kissed it passionately.

"Don't!" I cried. "Don't! I am unworthy."

"Ah," she said, "but I know." It was her ideal of me that troubled me most.

"I was quite sure that he would not yet have discovered that the notes were gone. I resolved to replace them in his room." She started. "I found a way of entering from the back."

"No," she cried, "no!"

"Yes," I said, quietly. She burst into tears. "Don't turn on me, Cis," I begged, huskily.

"Turn on you? I!" She laughed hysterically. Then she sat on my knee, and put her soft arms round my neck. I will not write all the tender things she said.

"He was waiting there in the dark. He turned on the electric light. He had a revolver— You are faint? Let me get you some water." She clung to me, passionately.

"My dear," she cried, "my dear! But he accepted your explanation? He let you go?"

"No; I smashed the lamp and escaped in the dark. He fired at me, but—"

"Your hand—your poor hand?"

"The broken glass did that, when I got in. He missed me."

"I hate him!" she cried. I smiled.

"You must remember that he took me for a robber." She shuddered.

"Suppose he finds you?"

"It is not very likely." He had been trying vainly all these years. "He does not know my name."

"But you might meet each other. There will be a description in the papers. He— Oh, Frank, you did it all for me!" I petted her.

"You can repay me. I shall leave London to-morrow. When George is well enough you must explain to him. Then—will you come to me?"

"Anywhere." I smiled again. Other things mattered so little.

"Abroad? Over the seas?"

"Wherever you are, dear." Her soft hair brushed against my cheek.

We were silent for a time. Then she started.

"The notes?" she asked.

"I laid them among his papers before he discovered me. He will think they were mislaid."

"When George knows," she said, brokenly, "he will try to amend. He didn't mean to do it—I am sure he couldn't—"

"It must have been a sudden temptation," I asserted. "We are all weak—all." She shook her head.

"Not you." I bowed my head.

"Whatever reports Randall may set about concerning me—he is a very unscrupulous man—you will believe just what I have told you, nothing more?"

"Not a word more," she promised.

"If he should identify me—" She trembled.

"You don't think he will?"

"He may connect me with George's accident in some way."

"Why should he?"

"The two things will be in his mind together."

"You must go away at once, dearest. For my sake, you will take no risks?"

"I shall go to-morrow, before he has time to do much."

There was a loud knock at the street door. We sprang up and faced each other, our hearts in our eyes. The servant-girl dragged along the passage.

"I want to see Mr. Venning." It was Randall's voice. Our faces went ashy white.

"He has met with an accident, sir." Randall gave a stifled exclamation. The girl went on to explain that the injured man was unconscious, and could see no one. We looked at each other with momentary relief.

"He will go," I whispered.

"Would you like to see Miss Venning, sir?" the girl asked. Cicely moved toward the door, as if she would keep him out.

"Yes," he answered. "I should. Ask her to see me, please."

"Frank! What shall I do?"

"See him," I breathed. "I shall go in there." I pointed to the folding doors leading to the room where George was. "Be careful. He is cunning. He will—" The girl knocked at the door.

"Quick! quick!" I slipped into the bedroom and pulled the doors nearly to. "Come in!"

"If you please, miss, Mr. Randall would like to see you."

"Mr. Randall?" She struggled to compose herself. "I— Oh, yes, in a few moments." The girl went out and Cicely stole across to me.

"Turn down the gas," she murmured. "But leave the door just ajar. You will hear. I am a foolish little woman, and not very brave; but I shall try to be clever and brave for you." I kissed her. She flung her dear arms round my neck. Then she went out, closing the door, except for a narrow chink. There was no sound for a moment but the labored breathing of the injured man, whom I could barely see in the darkened room. Then Cicely rang the bell.

"I shall be pleased to see Mr. Randall," she said. I scarcely knew her voice, it was so firm.

I caught a glimpse of her, standing erect and calm; and of Randall's dark, cruel face, with thick red lips and projecting teeth, as he greeted her. Then they passed out of my line of sight, and I could only hear.

The injured man moved slowly on his bed, and made a low sound as if he would call.

IV

RANDALL listened in silence while Cicely told him of her brother's accident, and the unconsciousness that had resulted.

"I am very sorry," he said, absently, when she had concluded. I felt that he was thinking of something else, and clenched my hands to keep myself still. My nerves were unstrung, and the suspense seemed more than I could bear.

"Are you sure it was an accident?" he asked.

"What else could it be?"

"An attempt on his life."

"No!" she cried, sharply. "Why should you imagine such a thing?"

"To-night an attempt has been made on mine. I suspect the same hand." I could hear Cicely catch her breath.

"You have taken me by surprise," she said at length. "George has no enemy—"

"Probably he called himself a friend." He did suspect my connection with George, then! He was always quick-witted.

"A friend?" She laughed incredulously, but the laugh was not like her laugh.

"You would wish to bring him to justice, of course?"

"Of course." Surely she could not suspect me?

"Was your brother careful in his choice of friends?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Will you give me their names, so that I may make a few inquiries?" I could feel her looking at me through the door.

"Really, I see no reason for suspecting them," she said, slowly.

"Will you allow me to judge of that?"

"I should prefer my brother to judge," she said, decidedly, "when he is able."

"Meanwhile, my dear Miss Vennen, the ruffian may escape. You don't wish that?"

"Of course not; but why should anyone attack my brother?"

"To rob him." She laughed mirthlessly.

"He had nothing worth taking."

"Do you know what he had?"

"What do you mean?" Her voice trembled violently; and I set my teeth. Even if he had not missed the notes he would see the opportunity of working on her feelings.

"My question was a plain one," he said, slowly. He was evidently trying to gain time for thought.

"I have already told you that my brother had nothing worth taking." Her voice was steady again, but the effort was apparent.

"Perhaps not—of his own."

The figure in the bed moved again. He was awake, and listening—or was it only my fancy?

"You insinuate—" There was a pause.

"Possibly his—friend—wished his keys," Randall suggested. I breathed freely again. Evidently he had not missed the notes.

"Oh, no; they were all left in his pocket."

"Or wished him out of the way so as to attack me." I could hear my poor little girl drawing her breath.

"You think the friend wished that?"

"Have you any reason for doubting it?" She did not answer. "Why else should he come to my rooms?"

"I don't believe he attacked George." Randall laughed.

"There are two alternatives. You shall choose. If they were not enemies, they were accomplices."

"You don't mean that my brother—I will not listen to such a suggestion." There was a long pause. Randall got up and paced the room, and I waited desperately to see what card he would play.

"One of two persons has robbed me. If it is your brother—"

"I don't believe it," she interrupted.

"Then give me the names of his friends, so that I may trace the other person."

There was a further silence. "It will be better for your brother," he said, threateningly. The figure on the bed moved, I was sure.

"That," she said, decidedly, "he must judge—when he is able." Randall threw his head back, impatiently. I caught a glimpse of his shaggy hair.

"It will be too late. I shall have taken other steps."

"I cannot help it," she said, desperately.

"Do you not care for your brother?"

She laughed hysterically. It hurt me to hear her.

"Oh!" she cried, "if you knew how much!"

"Then for his sake, Miss Venning—I am a hard man."

"I know that."

"Who told you?" he asked, swiftly. "Your brother did not." He had not been hard on George—yet.

"It is common report," she said, coldly. He laughed, ironically.

"Since you believe it, be wise. You evidently know the person who entered my office. If you persist in trying to conceal—"

"I have nothing to conceal." I could feel his eyes piercing her. "Those of my brother's friends whom I know are above suspicion."

"Then tell me their names."

"I see no reason to do so."

"At least tell me if you know a man named—but he will have changed his name. Let me describe him." He gave a description of me.

"I do not know that person," she said, firmly.

"He is a thief—forger—murderer!" She gave a sharp cry.

"How do you know?" she asked, with an evident effort to control her voice.

"I knew him years ago. He killed my brother." It was a fair fight and forced upon me, as I have said. They did not call these things murder in the backwoods.

"Why do you connect him with my brother?" He leaned back in his chair, so that I could see his face. He was evidently not quite certain of his ground.

"I do not wish to hurt your brother. If you will give me what information you have—I can see that you have some—I will promise to forgive him. I wish to punish the scoundrel who would have murdered me to-night."

"You have no reason to connect them. I do not believe you. I—" Her voice ended in a sob.

"I have every reason," he said, sternly. "He left in my room certain bank-notes. Your brother stole

them!" Cicely sprang up with a sharp cry, and I saw her face. It was white and working convulsively. The figure in the bed rose on one elbow and pointed a shaking finger at the door.

"It is a lie!" he called, in a hoarse, buried voice. "A lie!"

Cicely staggered—grasped at the table. I rushed into the room and caught her in my arms. The fierce, choking voice followed me through the door.

"It is a lie!"

V

I PUT Cicely gently in a chair, and turned to my enemy. He was looking into the darkened room with an amused smile.

"It was a lie," he admitted, coolly; "but it has served its purpose better than I hoped." He gave a little jerk of his head in my direction. I could feel their eyes turn on me, but my lips refused to move.

"George," said Cicely, "he did it for your sake." It had not occurred to her to believe the other things that Randall had said about me.

"He shall not suffer," he answered. Randall laughed, mockingly.

"If you will listen to me—" he began.

"Wait," said George, sharply. "Give me a light, Frank, and put some pillows behind me."

I turned up the gas and raised him with pillows. His head was bound with white bands. His face was whiter. He leaned heavily on me as I lifted him, and his hand caressed my shoulder. "Admit that you are Melville," he whispered. I started. "Deny the rest." So he knew!

"The proofs?" I asked. He pushed me away, feebly.

"Deny," he whispered, earnestly. I pressed his hand and returned to Cicely's side. Denial was useless; but it was easier than confession before her.

"Now, Mr. Randall," said George

Venning, sternly, "we will hear you. Perhaps you will first explain why you said I stole the notes."

Randall frowned. If it had been conceivable, I should have thought that he flushed.

"To be candid," he told Cicely, suavely, "I merely wished to frighten you into giving me the name of our friend, here. I handed the notes to your brother to make some payments abroad on my behalf. He was on his road to the station for the Continental Express when he met with his accident."

"Perhaps you will explain the circumstances under which you were making the payment?" George suggested, meaningly. Randall changed color.

"That is not the point."

"It will be." Randall considered, with his chin on his hand. "You threaten me?"

"If you take it so." Randall drew a pattern on the carpet with his foot.

"I accept the challenge," he replied, quietly. There was a flicker of his eyelids that meant danger. I knew the sign.

"Very good. Now, tell your lie about my friend—" George looked at me—"my tried and trusted friend." Cicely glanced at her brother with one of her swift smiles, and pressed my hand.

"Your friend does not look so anxious to hear it," Randall sneered. I caught George's eyes.

"I do not mind the truth," I said, with affected calm. Randall crossed his legs and rested his hands on them.

"You admit that you broke into my office?"

George moved, impatiently.

"Why waste time?" he demanded. "We know all about that. It is nothing."

"The law punishes such trifles."

"I doubt it—when everything is explained. I know of worse things." He looked hard at Randall, who smiled.

"Your cards are just good enough

to win that point," he said, indifferently. "I concede it."

"Go on."

"Leaving trifles—" he turned to me—"there is an old score. Eleven years ago you were in Australia, at Exton. You went by the name of Melville. Do you deny it?"

"No," I said, slowly, "I do not."

"I could prove it if you did. You became my partner in a certain enterprise."

"And you robbed me of my little all."

"A statement quite unsupported by proof," he chuckled.

"It is true."

"That does not matter."

"It matters very much," cried Cicely. Her brother held up his hand.

"Let him finish his story," he said.

"Among other things, you forged my name." It was in my dire extremity, to recover a few pounds of the hundreds of which he had swindled me.

"I deny it," I said, sharply.

"I—have—the—proofs."

There was silence for a few moments. George looked at me anxiously.

"They are fabricated," I stated, hoarsely. I knew otherwise.

"We shall see. Also, I have proof of other crimes."

"Boyish errors—no more."

"They will count up with the others." George tried to shrug his shoulders, but winced with pain.

"Make an end of it," I said, angrily, "or—"

"I will make an end of it," he shouted. "Coward! perjurer! murderer!"

Cicely stepped forward as if she would spring at him. I had not thought so gentle a creature could look so fierce.

"You lie!" I thundered.

"Call it what you like—you killed my brother. The law calls it murder. I have proofs! proofs! proofs!"

"You lie!" I cried.

"What proofs?" asked George.

"The revolver, and one or two trifles that he left behind—"

"No proofs at all," said George, contemptuously.

"The depositions of Arthur Bourne, and of Henry Furse, since dead. A ready witness in William Tyson—"

"Now dead also," George interjected. Randall stiffened.

"How do you know?"

"I know many things," he answered, meaningly. They faced each other with keen eyes.

"The written proofs—I have not named them all—are enough," Randall began.

"If they exist, and are genuine." George looked at me.

"If they exist," I said, steadily, "they are forgeries." I knew otherwise. "You know he is a liar."

"A liar!" cried Cicely. There was a tone in her voice that I had not heard before. "Send him away!"

"Hush, little Cis," said her brother, gently. She sat down beside him, with her head against his shoulder. When he looked up again his white face was very stern.

"If you remember, you gave the depositions, and other documents to which you refer, to Tyson. He was nearly as big a villain as yourself, but not quite; and as he approached eternity he had, as you may have, some qualms of conscience. On his deathbed he told me that he had destroyed the—fabrications. I think—" George smiled—"he was less anxious to save an innocent man than to be revenged on you." Randall leaped from his chair.

"Thief!" he cried. "You have made away with them!" He rushed toward the bed. I knocked him down. Cicely sprang in front of her brother.

"He will not attempt it again," I said, quietly. Randall picked himself up slowly.

"I shall find fresh proofs," he snarled.

"Or manufacture them," I said, boldly. My courage had returned.

"I shall search for evidence till I find it."

"You won't find it," I declared. George smiled.

"Hadn't you better give it up?" he suggested.

Randall wiped his cheek—my knuckles had cut it. Then he turned to Cicely. "You have heard what I said," he told her, in a low, hissing voice. "You saw how he looked and hesitated. Turn it over in your mind, and consider what I could gain by inventing such a story. There are a few proofs of other things, proofs that have not disappeared, that I can put at your service. 'Boysish errors,' you know! Some people call them crimes—"

"Go!" she commanded, pointing to the door. I saw a dumb pain in her eyes. How would it result when she questioned me?

"Go!" I said, furiously, "or—"

He went unsteadily to the door and turned the knob; then he looked back at her, and said: "I think you will have some doubts."

I stepped toward him, but George called out suddenly:

"Stop! You have not seen my hand." Randall closed the door and leaned against it. "A year ago," said George, in a weak but level voice, "I realized that it might some day be necessary to protect myself against you. You might think that I held too many clues, you know—"

"I have been straight with you," Randall protested.

"To-night, for example?" He did not reply. "Anyhow, I took the trouble to complete some of them." Randall laughed scornfully.

"Where do they lead?" he asked. George looked at him fixedly.

"They lead to the Rue St.-Honoré," he said. "From there they lead the person to whom I was taking your money, to—shall we say penal servitude?"

Randall gave a cry, and tottered. Then he sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"She never wronged you," he gasped. "What she did was for my sake. She—she—" He trembled

like a leaf. "Do what you like to me! I will give you proofs enough, if you will spare my mother."

"Have you spared others? Would you have spared my friend—my sister?"

Randall rose and staggered to the door. His hands shook so that he could not turn the knob. His face worked horribly.

"George," cried Cicely, "spare her." He shook his head. "For my sake—"

"No," he said, sternly.

"For our mother's sake, George. We all do wrong." I drew my breath.

"All," I said, huskily.

George sank back wearily on his pillows.

"For my sister's sake," he said, "I will spare her. Now, go."

Randall bowed in a dazed way, and

went out. He laughed hysterically, frightfully, outside the door. I opened my arms, and Cicely crept into them.

"You don't believe—" I began, unsteadily. The door swung back again and Randall staggered in.

"For my mother's sake, Miss Vening," he said, "and yours, I will tell the truth—the solemn truth, by all that I hold dear. The proofs that I spoke of—about your lover—they were forgeries—all of them. It was a lie!"

"Your motive?" she asked, slowly.

"A motive that you are too gentle to understand. My hatred of a good man—whom I—I have wronged."

The hatred was plain in his face as he glanced back from the door; but Cicely did not see it. Her face was on my shoulder, and her arms were round my neck.



LOVE'S TRIUMPH

IN Summer, when the days are long,
The Roses and the Lilies talk;
They hear a murmur like a song,
As 'neath the trees young lovers walk.

They wonder what the words may be
That make the girl's cheeks like a rose;
And what he says—that gallant he—
To stir her heart from its repose.

Ah, Roses, you have not the spell;
And, Lilies white, you must forego
The language in which lovers tell
The secrets only lovers know.

To be a flower were joy enough,
If Summer lasted all the year;
But Autumn comes, and winds are rough—
Roses and Lilies disappear.

'Tis lovers who outlive the year,
And triumph over Winter's snow;
If love be true, they need not fear,
Though mocking seasons come and go.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

MORNING BY THE SEA

SHEER on the brink of morning,
 When day sings to the sea,
 The wanton glitter and gleam of earth
 Are wine to me.

My heart wakes to its tuning
 Like a mellowed violin
 That croons and cries in an ecstasy
 The songs within.

The flush of ungirt passion
 Crimson my eager lips;
 My soul akin to the flashing gulls,
 Upsoars and dips.

A rouse from some mad revel
 Of sea-drunk buccaneers,
 Flung to the echoes of yesterday,
 Beats in my ears.

With fierce, resplendent gladness
 Outpours the flood of day,
 The curse of the dead, unshriven night
 Is swept away.

Sheer on the brink of morning,
 Pagan, unshamed and free,
 I drink earth's wine, and a strength divine
 Exults in me.

EMERY POTTELL.



THE PUNISHMENT

“WHAT'S the penalty for bigamy?”
 “Two mothers-in-law!”



MACBETH REVISED

I DARE do all that may become a man; who dares do more is—a woman!

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

By Francis Livingston

"Do you care particularly for this? I confess I find it rather slow. A cane chair on the hotel piazza would be more to my fancy. There we could at least smoke."

The band had just struck up a two-step and was pounding away vigorously. Couples were prancing eagerly into action. Every dancing man was on the floor within the first five measures. A score of girls were *hors de combat* for lack of partners. Soon even some of these were circling the floor in pairs.

"It's always a melancholy sight—girls dancing with one another," said Barclay, the elder of the two men who were watching the scene. "Why don't you get a partner, Haslett?"

"Dancing is not what I came up here for."

"Too much exertion, eh?"

"Yes."

"Let's take a turn outside on the grass, since you wish to smoke."

The two men passed out from the ball-room of the large wooden building, which at this little Summer resort was known as the Casino. It was a beautiful July night, with a full moon. In the distance the surf boomed pleasantly.

"Haslett," said the elder man, "I understand you came to Sconset for rest and recreation. Will you tell me just what your idea of recreation is?"

"Simply to enjoy the sunlight, the air and the water," said the younger man; "to drive a little, to boat a little, to swim; but principally to rest and forget that there is such a thing as pig-iron."

"And when your vacation time is over?"

"I shall go back to New York and live on the memory of it, hating my work more bitterly than ever, until Sconset fades away like a beautiful vision; and, as Winter approaches, I shall, I suppose, get comfortably back into my rut again and be as dully contented as I was before."

"You know no one here, I think you told me?"

"Not a soul but you, whom I met for the first time on the boat coming up."

"Then the question of people does not enter into your idea of recreation; that is, you are content with the physical enjoyment to be derived from boating, bathing and loafing, without any thought of what influence your stay here might have on your future?"

"I'll answer 'yes' to that, though I don't know what you are driving at. What does anyone expect to get out of a three weeks' Summer vacation but a rest and a good time according to his lights?"

Barclay puffed away meditatively at his cigar for a few moments. Then, "Haslett," he said, "unless you are very observing, you did not notice a rather plain little woman, accompanied by a dark-haired girl dressed in white, enter the ball-room during the last dance but one. They took seats on the opposite side of the room, near the door, and, like us, sat watching the dancers."

"No," said Haslett, "I did not notice them."

"Well, they are Mrs. Frank J. March and her daughter. They came from Ohio, but live in New York now. Five years ago Frank March was vice-president of a little one-horse railroad somewhere in western Ohio. But he

was a man who knew how to seize an opportunity as soon as one showed its head. He let nothing get past him. To-day he is worth anywhere from three to five millions and is a power in the railroad world. Last Spring he bought a house in upper Fifth avenue and moved his family to New York."

"Well, if it is expected of me to admire Mr. March's enterprise and acumen, I am willing to admit that I do."

"But that is not all, Haslett. The genius of a man like Frank March does not centre in himself. It radiates to all parts of the country. Out of every opportunity he seized for himself he forged a hundred for other people. Yours sits on the other side of the ball-room, near the door, watching the dancers."

"I don't see——"

"Of course you don't see. Ah, the wilfully blind! Imagine this: Here are the Marches, rich people, with a beautiful home in New York where, in spite of their money, they are, as yet, nobodies. Here are you, a young fellow, blessed with health and strength, straight of limb and good to look at. You are not a conceited ass, and will know I am not flattering you. You talk sufficiently well, you play on the piano with an agreeable touch—I heard you strumming in the hotel parlor this morning—you sing a little, I suppose, and dance. How do you pass your time in New York? From nine until five you enter up so many tons of pig-iron, sold at so much per ton. At night you go to your room and read, or go to the theatre, or for a call with one of your fellow-clerks—upon his cousins, maybe. You lead a perfectly blameless, colorless life in this rut in which you yourself say you travel, and all this—good heavens!—while New York is simply teeming with chances for a young chap with your capital!"

Haslett reddened in the moonlight.

"Perhaps what you say is true to some extent, but what can I do but watch and wait for my opportunity? All men are not born Marches."

"You can do more than watch and

wait. You can go to meet it half-way. That is something you owe to yourself—it should be a matter of principle with you. Come with me," added Barclay, throwing away his cigar. "I have met Mrs. March, and I am going to introduce you to her and her daughter. Their house will not be a bad place for you to call next Winter, nor will Frank March be a bad man for you to know. Come!"

Barclay moved easily across the floor, during the next intermission, to where the Marches sat, and asked leave to present his friend, Mr. Haslett. Mrs. March was a small, uneasy little woman, uncertain and fluttery in conversation. Her daughter, Mirella, was a tall, pale girl of perhaps twenty-two. Pretty she could not have been called; interesting, perhaps. She had dark, serious eyes and a sensitive mouth. Beyond that she was, at first glance, like dozens of other girls. She was of a silent nature, too, and Haslett elicited little from her in the way of conversation. He danced with her several times and brought an ice to Mrs. March. When the dancing was over Barclay and he walked with the ladies to their cottage and were invited to call.

Haslett thought long over Barclay's advice that night, most over that part of it left unspoken, but well understood by both. It seemed sound, and the field was a promising one. Mirella March did not attract him particularly, but he was heart-whole, and she would be as easy to love as another woman.

"I shall go into the game," he said to himself, at last, "to see what it may lead to. But it will be hard work at first. The girl doesn't seem to be able to talk."

He took a membership in the golf club and in the Casino, and made it his business to become acquainted with as many of the cottagers as possible. Some amateur theatricals were in progress. Haslett took an active part in them and tried to persuade Mirella to do the same, but the girl was too shy, and had no talent in that direc-

tion. She went to the rehearsals, though, and there realized that her new acquaintance was becoming a prodigious favorite.

Haslett presented some of the young men to Mirella, and the March cottage became the scene of some kind of merry little party almost every evening. In the morning, at the bathing hour, the young people always met on the beach, although neither Mirella nor her mother went into the water.

One day Barclay and Haslett took a carriage and drove Mrs. March and Mirella over the moors. Another day they went sailing. A faint color had by this time come into the girl's cheeks. She was brighter and seemed happier.

As they sat on the veranda of the March cottage one evening at the end of a fortnight, Haslett said: "The saddest thing about a jolly outing like this is that it must end so soon."

"So soon?" echoed Mirella.

"My time is up on Saturday; I must leave then," answered Haslett.

Mirella sat where the lamplight from the open door fell on her profile. She turned on Haslett a quick look of sorrow and dismay. As she met his eye a deep flush came up over her throat and cheeks, and she drew back a little way into the shadow.

"I thought—I do not know why—that you were here for the Summer. We shall miss you—" her voice trembled a little—"you have been very kind to mother and me."

That night Haslett wrote a letter. Early next morning he sought Barclay on the hotel piazza. "Barclay," he said, in a business-like tone, "I am going to ask you to lend me some money."

"Certainly, my lad," drawled Barclay, in his smooth voice; "nothing wrong I hope—pig-iron not holding back remittances?"

"Pig-iron and I are henceforth to be strangers. I have resigned my position in New York." He held up his letter. "I am going to remain in Sconset through August—that is, if you will lend me one hundred and fifty dollars."

Barclay had taken a roll of bills from his pocket. He looked up at Haslett quickly, shifted the money to his left hand and held out his right significantly. "Good boy—shake," he said in a whisper; "that's the spirit that wins."

"It seems to me part of the risk is yours," said Haslett; "I've no idea how I'm going to repay you this."

"I'm not afraid," said Barclay, laughing softly. "I've had my eyes open." Haslett colored. "And now," he said, jumping up as though to dismiss the subject, "let us go down to the beach."

As they passed the little post-office, Haslett dropped his letter in the mailbox.

Mrs. March was greatly pleased when Haslett announced his intention of prolonging his stay. Mirella said nothing, and if she felt any emotion this time she guarded her expression well. Haslett relaxed nothing of his devotion. He was satisfied that the girl loved him. The mother, he believed, would be on his side. He was somewhat dubious about the unknown and energetic Frank J., but, emboldened by his success so far, he felt a kind of eagerness to meet some formidable obstacle to be overcome.

One evening, at sunset, Mirella and he had strolled down toward the water. Now that she knew him well, the girl seemed surer of herself and had lost some of her taciturnity. This evening she was even inclined toward confidences.

"It was so lonely in New York during all those months," she said; "meeting and knowing all these pleasant people in this little place has been such a contrast. But if I had not known you I should be a stranger to most of them yet. I do not make acquaintances easily. It has reminded me of home here—the little town in Ohio where we have always lived. How strange the feeling, to come from a place like that, where everyone knows you, and where you know even every horse and dog you see on the street, to a great city in which you

are only an atom! Of course father is always taking us somewhere, to the theatre or the opera, and often he brings people to the house—perfect strangers, who feel no interest in me. But sometimes the loneliness and bitterness of it all bore upon me so heavily that I was desperately unhappy. Yet the life I was leading was one that made all the girls whom I had known at home—so they wrote me—wild with envy. Is it not strange?"

In exchange, Haslett told her about himself, something of his early life and his own experience in New York. "At least I will behave to her like a gentleman," he told himself, "and not like a common adventurer." He went on to say that he had given up his position and had now no settled business. "But I shall get something better and more congenial in which I shall succeed." He spoke in a full, confident tone. "It is only necessary to put heart and soul in anything you undertake in order to succeed. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, I suppose that is true," she answered, absently, and her eyes looked far out over the sea.

They walked on in silence for a time. The sun had set and the moon came up out of the water. They were now upon the cliff, the path they followed leading to the distant lighthouse.

Haslett paused at a little rustic seat. They sat there, high above the water. The village lights began to appear in the distance. "Mirella," he said, "will you be less lonely when you return to New York because of me? Mirella, will you be angry if I tell you that I love you?"

As he spoke the words they sounded hollow in his own ears. He felt a saving sense of shame that he could realize this. He saw her cheek grow white and she turned away her head. He took her hand and pressed it. For an instant it seemed as if the pressure were returned, but she drew it away slowly, as though regretfully.

It fluttered as it left his clasp, and then he saw that she was crying.

"Mirella," he said, in genuine distress, "what is it, dear? Have I hurt you?"

For some moments she did not reply; then: "I am sorry—oh, so sorry!" she said, in a trembling voice.

Haslett felt a flash of hot resentment—at himself for his heartless conduct, realizing that his scheme was collapsing; at the girl herself for this preliminary to a refusal when her very eyes had confessed her love for him.

"There is nothing to be sorry for," he said, coldly. "I was a fool, that is all."

She looked up at him quickly. Haslett had risen and was gazing darkly out at the water. "Will you sit beside me for a little while until I tell you something?" she said, almost bashfully. Haslett did as she requested. Her voice was steady when she began, although it faltered a little now and then.

"You do not know," she said, "anything of my life beyond the little I have told you. It has not been eventful, but one thing you have a right to know. I had always lived in Bucyrus until we came to New York, and knew nothing, from experience, of the world outside. My father has been a very successful man, and our fortunes have improved greatly since the time when I was a school-girl. Then, and long before, there was some one—I had always known him—even as a little boy he had called himself my sweetheart and said he would marry me. We grew up with this idea always in mind. It deepened into a settled determination with him and I—I allowed—oh, I must be truthful with you!—I was fond of him, and I looked forward to the certainty of marrying him some day. Then came the change in my father's fortunes. His people were far from wealthy, but he was bold and courageous. A year before we came away he left Bucyrus for the West. He said—I will tell you his exact words

—'Mirella, you are a rich man's daughter; your parents have ambitious ideas for you, as is right. I will never ask you to marry a poor man. When I come to you it will be with an aim accomplished, or, at least, an end in sight. I shall not be ashamed to ask your father for you.' He went to Colorado—to the mines—where for six months he worked like a laborer. He has achieved, he will succeed, and then he will come for me. He believes that I have kept faith with him. Can you imagine what it would cost me to have him find out that he was deceived?"

"It was not fair to bind you with a promise when you had seen nothing of the world," said Haslett.

"I am bound by no promise. It is because he was so generous that I feel myself held the more securely. Ah!" cried the girl, "'fidelity'—'loyalty'—do these mean nothing except when they accord with our desires, our selfish wishes for our own happiness? I think I could never be happy while remembering that one faithful heart which had trusted me was disappointed."

"Shall we go back now?" asked Haslett, in the same cold voice.

"But something is due you also," said Mirella, as they walked together. "You are worthy the best any woman can give; it is only right to tell you that had we met when—had things been different—" She paused, unable to finish.

But Haslett's heart was filled with anger and bitterness at the outcome of his idea. He had not overestimated what Barclay called his "capital." He had touched the girl's heart, he had impressed the mother, he had been prepared for the father, but here he had come face to face with an insurmountable obstacle unexpectedly thrown in his path by the girl herself—a matter of principle.

Then came a sudden revulsion of feeling. He suddenly recognized in Mirella something to admire, to love.

The nobility of the girl's nature stood out in strong contrast to his own selfish conduct.

"Mirella," he said, "waste no sympathy on me—believe me, I do not deserve it. Stick to that young man in Colorado. There are few like him. You will meet with many men whose hearts are so small and dry that they rattle in their bodies like peas in a gourd. You will meet, have met others, and to them belongs the more shame, who, capable of recognizing, even of following the better way, have deliberately chosen the worse. Mirella, if you remember me at all, think of me as a man who was *not* ashamed to ask for your hand when he had not a dollar he could call his own."

As he faced her in the moonlight, his eyes shining with a generous resolve, Haslett had never looked so handsome. Poor Mirella was to recall him, through many a sleepless night, as he looked then.

"I shall remember you as a man who loved me—and," she whispered the rest, "whom I could have loved."

Haslett bent and pressed his lips to her hand, and after that there was silence between them. When he left Mirella at the cottage he turned and walked back to the cliff. It was midnight before he returned to the hotel.

In the morning Barclay was sitting on the hotel piazza smoking his pipe and reading the day-old paper. He wondered idly what had become of Haslett, when, as the stage which was to take the passengers to the morning boat rattled up to the door, the young man suddenly appeared. He wore his traveling suit and carried a hand-bag. A porter followed with his suit-case.

"Hello! what does this mean?" cried Barclay.

"I'm going to take this boat for New York," said Haslett.

Barclay stared. Then his eyes twinkled, but rather uncertainly.

"Going to interview papa?"

"No—uncle, maybe."

"What's the matter—anything wrong?" asked the elder man, in a low voice.

"No; everything's as it should be."

"But—but there must be something—"

"There is—this—" Haslett took from his pocket an envelope—"my note for the money I borrowed." Barclay drew back. "You'd better take it," said the young man, in a tone that admitted of no denial.

"Haslett, you might tell me what has happened. Has there been a quarrel?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, are you engaged to her?"

"No."

"Then you've bungled things somehow. That girl loved you. One had only to look at her when you were with her."

"Drop that!" said the young man, between his set teeth.

"Well, don't be so fierce. You surely can't say that I haven't been a friend to you in this matter."

"I don't say you haven't. I have

a great deal to thank you for—principally for introducing me to a good and noble woman."

"And you're running away from her! Haslett, I believe you're a fool!"

"Maybe. I'm not a scoundrel."

The young man threw his bag into the stage and clambered in after it.

Barclay leaned over the wheel and whispered: "Haslett, you're turning your back on a house in New York, a steam yacht and everything to make life worth the living."

Haslett looked straight between the ears of the off horse, but made no reply. The driver gathered up his reins.

Barclay could not repress a sneer. "Are you going back to pig-iron?" he asked.

"No; I couldn't if I wished to."

"Where are you going, then?"

"I don't know yet; I have some thoughts of going West."

"Going West?"

The stage had started, and Haslett turned to call over his shoulder, "Yes, to Colorado!"



MOON-MAGIC

DEAD dreams return and throng the night;
The lilies glimmer tall and white,
Like candles kindled by the moon;
Hark, how the dusky marshes croon!
The fireflies loop the lawns with light.

The fumes of jasmine flowers smite
My spirit with a fragrant might,
Recalling love's long withered noon—
Dead dreams return!

I stand amid a phantom rite,
I seem to hear as from a height,
The echo of some pain-old rune;
I sink into a silver swoon.
Time fades—the real has taken flight—
Dead dreams return!

MARY T. WAGGAMAN.

RELATING TO TOASTS PAST AND PRESENT

By the Duchess of Somerset

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen,
Here's to the widow of fifty,
Here's to the flaunting, extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

CHORUS

Let the toast pass;
Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the
glass!

EVERY line of Sheridan's lengthy song in "The School for Scandal," produced in 1777, is expressive of the convivial spirit, the extravagant speech and the jovial excess that the drinking of toasts demanded. It was a far cry from the wine-drinking of the ancients, preceded by libations offered to their gods, to the decadent days of the dandies when toasts came in fashion. Then they drank deeply, spoke loftily and loved mightily, while the old song tells that

Un chevalier, n'en doutez pas,
Doit ferir haut et parler bas.

The custom of drinking healths, however, is very old, for it was in vogue with both Romans and Saxons. Many of the characters in Shakespeare's plays were nothing loath to keep up the custom,* and Henry VIII.

* Pledging in wine, says Dr. Brewer, arose in the tenth century, when it was deemed necessary for one to watch over the safety of another while he was in the act of drinking. The Danes, well knowing how indifferent to everything else the English were when spiced ale was in the tankard, would often choose that opportunity for stabbing and for other effective modes of assault. In consequence, it became common for a man about to drink to ask his neighbor at the board, or by his side, to be his pledge while he imbibed. This must have been the origin of pledging in wine—partaking and then inviting another, or others, to drink the health of one whose name was given. It was a simple and universal method of expressing good will. Doubtless it was also often resorted to with the object of testing the principles and patriotism of the persons pledged.

had a way of his own in mingling compliments:

Sweetheart,
I were unmannerly to take you out
And not kiss you. A health, gentlemen,
Let it go round!

Anon he adds:

Let's be merry,
God, my Lord Cardinal, I have half a dozen
healths
To drink to these fair ladies.

Sir Toby Belch considered "drinking healths to my niece" ample excuse for nightly drunkenness, and vowed, "I'll drink to her as long as there's a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria."

Another fine instance of pledging in wine occurs in "King Henry IV." (Part II.):

ARCHBISHOP—I take your princely word for these redresses.
PRINCE JOHN—I give it you and will maintain my word:
And thereupon I drink unto your grace.

ARCHBISHOP—To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.
WESTMORELAND—I pledge your grace, and, if you knew what pains
I have bestowed to breed the present peace,
You would drink freely.

There is a certain dignified reserve in the above scene which the toasting of later times conspicuously lacked.

At the Lord Mayor's feast to both Houses of Parliament, in 1643, no healths were drunk, for an ordinance was passed which forbade the practice. The mailed arm of Puritanism lay heavy on the people, but the King was honored in secret. And when the reaction that followed the Restoration had brought about the wildest excess, Charles II., with

that fine irony of which he was master, more than suggested in a proclamation that some of his subjects showed their loyalty only by drinking his health.

For centuries the sons of Merrie England were mighty men to drink; the "lords of the old blood" pledged one another freely, and a lady's name was wont to give the prime flavor to their cups.

The ceremony involved in proposing toasts was inimical to the spontaneous gaiety of pledging in wine, which was generally done on the spur of the moment, often by those whose creed was that "great men should drink with harness on their throats."

There were frequent occasions when bitter impulse prompted a man to pledge his companions, but the impulse was genuine. The essential spirit of sincerity—whether for good or evil—changed with the manner of drinking healths, and eventually was discarded because it gave opportunities for wild dissipation.

The cavaliers and the gallants pledged; the beaux and the dandies toasted. It would be impossible to credit the former, though they could drink with all comers, with such an insensate act as dipping their glasses into the water in which a famous beauty had bathed, nor would they have boasted of drinking from glasses so filled; they were as capable of folly as the bucks of the eighteenth century, but not of folly of that kind.

Various origins are ascribed to the word "toast" in its health-drinking signification. Our ancestors had a liking for warm ingredients, such as flapdragon, and roasted crabs, in their cups, but toast was most commonly used.

Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in't, commands *Sir John Falstaff*, at the Garden Inn, and a description, worthy of *Sir John*, is put into the mouth of the *Earl of Rochester*, when he says:

Make it so large, when filled with sack,
Up to the swelling brim,
Vast toasts on the delicious lake
Like ships at sea may swim.

But neither of these notable men had any further idea about the toast than his delectation, for the word at that time had not become the synonym for drinking healths.

A reasonable derivation of the word in its application to the custom with which it has now so long been associated is suggested by Mr. Wedgwood in "Notes and Queries":

When clinking glasses in Germany the accompanying exclamation, "*Stoss an!*" (familiarly used in the present day in the plural "*Stosst an!*") seems to be the more probable origin. An analogous derivation is interesting: From the German *Gar Aus* (emptying the glass) we get the word carouse; and Shakespeare gives us the whole meaning in the line:

And quaff carouses to our mistress' health.

When a lady's name was coupled with drinking wine, to call her "a toast" may have come naturally, though forced indeed was much of the pseudo-sentiment of that day. The deadly seriousness, as well as the debonair gaiety, of pledging in wine was lost when festive indulgence justified itself by toasts that included alike women and hounds, politics and principles, and at length degenerated into a habit of proposing as a toast anything that would serve as excuse for lengthening drinking orgies.

It is said that, in the days of the Stuarts' exile, their adherents at home had sometimes to drink to "The King," but were wont to follow it by a second toast which had a secret meaning. "The King again!" was, without doubt, their token for the other, absent king. Yet if, at the same feast, "The Protestant Succession!" was drunk, it must have produced some uncomfortable qualms of conscience to loyalists of that faith.*

Dr. John Bryam's toast to the Pretender is typical of a certain accommodating spirit that was rife in that Prince's day.

* In England the sovereign's health is, of course, always the first toast at public banquets, and is received by the company standing.

God bless the King—the Faith's Defender!
 God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender!
 Yet which Pretender is, and which is King,
 God bless my soul!—is quite another thing.

"The White Rose!" was often drunk by the Jacobites, and with grim humor another health, that of "the little gentleman in the black silk coat!" by which was meant the mole over whose heap the horse of King William III. tripped when he was killed.

When royalty is present at dinners in England it is not etiquette for finger-bowls to be put before any of the guests except the royalties, as at one time, when the health of the King was drunk, by a swing of the glass over the finger-bowl the royalist signified that he meant "The King over the water."

When the Third and Fourth battalions of the Royal Lancaster Regiment were at Wigan in the late Queen's reign, they drank nightly to

The Queen, the *Duke* of Lancaster, because the reigning sovereign, whether king or queen, is *Duke* of Lancaster.

Dr. Harington, of Bath, physician and musical composer, born in 1727, wrote the following:

Here's to Rex, Lex and Pontifex!
 A toast no honest heart rejects.
 The King in safety all protect,
 The Church to future bliss direct;
 But knaves who plot the State to vex,
 May laws provide for all their necks!

Is this toast meant to be complimentary?

God bless our wives!
 They keep our hives
 In little Bees and Honey;
 They darn our socks—they soothe life's shocks,
 And don't they spend the money!

I will now quote a few toasts that, though well known, are characteristic of toasting days:

Here's a health to all them that I love,
 Here's a health to all those that love me;
 Here's a health to all those that love those
 that I love,
 And to those that love them that love me.

Another:

Here's a health to me and mine,
 Not forgetting thee and thine;
 And when thee and thine,
 Come to see me and mine,
 May me and mine
 Make thee and thine
 As welcome as thee and thine
 Have ever made me and mine.

"The Climax of Toasts" is from The Anecdote Library. When Lord Stair* was ambassador in Holland, he entertained largely foreign ministers. The Abbé de Ville was French ambassador; in proffering a toast he alluded to his master, Louis XV., and his device, "the rising sun, my master!" was his toast. The Baron de Reisbach proposed the moon out of compliment to the Empress-Queen. The Earl of Stair then drank his master, King William, in the name of Joshua, the son of Nun, who made sun and moon stand still.

There are numerous toast-lists extant, published in days when every dinner-guest had to be prepared in turn to propose the health of some one or the success of a cause. Every imaginable topic has its toasting sentiment in these productions, and they suggest to the reader, as Mercutio hath it:

Dreams of healths five fathoms deep.

Quasi-sentiment was much in vogue in the days of the dandies, and in their toasts we find the false ring which suggests that they were mostly made on compulsion. "Courtly ways and courtly days" did not always include the courtesy prompted by innate refinement. The hard living and hard drinking of our ancestors were not calculated to foster the charm of wit and wisdom that have their chief graces in cool judgment and temperate speech.

The following are a few of the kinds

* Lord Stair's "Master King William" is made a contemporary of the Empress Maria Theresa and Louis XV. The scene of the story is The Hague, where Lord Stair was British Plenipotentiary in 1742-43, immediately before the Dettingen campaign, when George II. was king. The Anecdote Library has confused this Lord Stair with his grandfather or father, who both served King William III.—the former Sir James Dalrymple, whom King William created Viscount Stair, or Lord President of the Court of Session; and the latter, John, second Viscount and first Earl of Stair and Secretary of State for Scotland.

of toasts that were always well received in the early part of the last century:

I'll give my toast, the grand Alliance:
Friendship, freedom, wine and love!

Gentlemen, I give you her who halves our sorrows and doubles our joys:
WOMAN!

May you live as long as you like,
And have all you like as long as you live!

Champagne for real friends,
Real pain for sham friends!

The undergraduates' toast hardly savors of pedantry:

May we kiss all the ladies we please,
And please all the ladies we kiss!

"The memory of Nelson and the brave!" is a fine seaman's toast. It is touching to think that the three lines of white braid on the sailors' collars were put there, in the first instance, to commemorate Nelson's three great victories; also that the black scarf each British sailor wears was first worn as a token of mourning after the death of Nelson.

The following naval toasts were often used in old days:

The British Navy: May it ever sail on a sea of glory,
Wafted to victory by the gales of prosperity!

May the tar who loses one eye in war never see distress in the other!

May Content be our pilot in the Voyage of Life!

Here's to the tar that sticks like pitch to his duty!

Sailors on Saturday night drink to their "Sweethearts and Wives," and are superstitious about such toasts being drunk in water, as are others about left-handed toasts which are supposed to bring evil.

A droll naval toast is often quoted:

Here's to us.
Any like us?
Damned few,
Thank God!

The Dorsetshire toast sounds sincere:

Horses strong, stock healthy,
Barns full, money plenty!

Alphonse Karr once gave a charming toast after a medical dinner: "I propose," he said, "the health of the sick!"

The French toast, "*Mes amis, vos amis, les absents,*" is very comprehensive.

There are innumerable sporting toasts, such as:

May every fox-hunter be well mounted,
May we always run the scent breast high!

As for patriotic and military toasts, they are endless, such as:

The British Army, firm in disaster, courageous in danger, merciful in victory!

Every soldier a pleasant halt, every rogue a long halter!

May British laurels never fade!

Honor and the Sword—may they never be parted!

May the bier of the brave never want a laurel wreath!

Britons in unity and unity in Britons!

In an article on toasts in *Chambers's Journal*, an amusing story is told of an actor who had to propose the two services. After naming them he said he had never been in the army, though he had been in many a mess, while the only chance he had ever had of entering the navy was when he had a narrow escape from getting into the Fleet.*

The same article gives a misanthropic, if not churlish toast:

Our future wives!
Distance lends enchantment to the view!

Few people who drink toasts to the "Stars and Stripes" of our cousins on the other side know the origin of the flag.†

* A well-known debtors' prison at that time.

† The great Washington was descended from an old family of that name whose family seat was at Sulgrave in Northamptonshire. The old manor house, in which many generations of Washingtons were born and bred can still be seen there, and, until quite recently, the entrance door of the house was surmounted by a stone escutcheon bearing the arms of the Washington family.

A few years ago, however, an enterprising American who was visiting the place gave £100 for the escutcheon, and bore it away in triumph to his native land. It is a somewhat startling coincidence that the national flag of the United States is an almost exact reproduction of that coat-of-arms, viz., stars and stripes. The only difference consists in the larger number of each of these in the United States flag.

About the year 1840 toasts at private parties began to decline in favor, but great men and notable events are still complimented in this manner, though the custom is now almost entirely relegated to official occasions and public banquets. And toasts, both in Europe and America, continue to make opportunities for royal personages, statesmen, men of letters and artists to pronounce opinions that have much weight far beyond the limited audiences to which they are delivered.

At the recent banquet in the Mansion House, given by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Joseph Dimisdale, M.P., after the presentation of the freedom of the city to the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, at which nearly five hundred persons were present, I was much interested in the etiquette observed. After the *déjeuner* the toast-master called out the names of all the principal guests at the feast, and loving-cups were passed round the tables. Three persons stood in turn—one who had drunk, to protect the one drinking and the per-

son about to drink. The dagger in the city arms suggests times when the municipal entertainments did not always pass off without interruption.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech contained a few apt words, which I take leave to quote here:

"On my wife's behalf, and on my own, I return you most hearty thanks for the toast which you have so cordially received. My wife is in the rather unusual position of having two nationalities" (laughter and "hear! hear!"), "but as these are the two whom it is the chiefest object of our diplomacy to keep in agreement and in affectionate concord, I hope you will think my wife's position is no disadvantage."

Hoping it will prove acceptable to my readers, I will follow this train of thought, and, in conclusion, parody a curious old toast concerning England, Ireland and St. George's Channel:

"May we never know any other difference between England and the United States than the Atlantic Ocean!"



THE PLAINT OF A LOVER

I BOUGHT a gilt bonbonnière
With wide pink ribbon gay;
She thanked me for the dainty gift
In a most bewitching way.
I went in debt for violets,
She rapturously confessed,
She doted on the purple flowers,
And pinned them on her breast.

I pawned my watch to buy a fan,
She let me call her Grace
And kiss her in the dusky hall
Behind its spangled lace.
But when I brought a solitaire,
Her maiden vow to bind,
I found it, with a freezing look,
Disdainfully declined.

MINNA IRVING.

A BALLAD OF INCONSTANCY

LORD BUTTERFLY, thou one-day king,
 I pray thee, pause a bit,
 Give answer to my questioning:
 Why dost thou ever flit
 From flower to flower on fickle wing—
 One moment, then away?
 Is there no bud of all the Spring
 So sweet thou fain wouldest stay?

*The day is short, and long my quest,
 The fleeting moments call;
 How can I tell which flower is best
 Unless I taste of all?*

Laborious Bee, arrest thy flight,
 And share thy lore with me;
 Thou surely canst not deem it right,
 Such sad inconstancy?
 I've watched thee here and there alight,
 And sip without rebuff—
 Thou think'st not on the flowers' plight—
 Were not one flower enough?

*The treasure-comb which I would fill
 Must last till time completes
 The year—I wish no flower ill,
 But none holds all the sweets.*

Thou, Robin Redbreast, cease thy song,
 E'en though thy mate repine;
 And dost thou, too, defend the wrong,
 This fickleness of thine?
 I've watched thee now three Summers long,
 At work and love and play;
 Do thoughts regretful never throng
 Of mates of yesterday?

*My heart is filled with love for all—
 The past a dream, and when
 I hear a lover's answering call
 I wake to dream again.*

WILLIAM WALLACE WHITELOCK.



A WOMAN says, "It's no use talking." She doesn't think so, all the same.

A VULGAR PASSION

By Bayard Veiller

"I HATE a jealous man," said Chlorinda, vindictively. Then she looked at me from the corners of her eyes, and after that she pouted.

There are but two things to do when Chlorinda pouts: one is to turn away; the other requires such daring that there is no use mentioning it.

"Jealousy," I said, slowly, "is an extremely vulgar passion."

"And so silly," added Chlorinda.

We were sitting on the veranda, the moon was shining down on us in a most dangerous manner, and there was no one nearer than the dear girl's sister, who was walking slowly up and down the beach with a man. We had been talking of many things; but my mind jumped nimbly after Chlorinda's. Constant association with the young woman is making me a mental gymnast.

"I have noticed several times, Mr. Hastings," went on the dear girl, "that you have shown no slight evidence of the green-eyed monster."

I made up my mind instantly to brave the thing out. "I didn't know it was noticeable," I said, placidly, although my heart was beginning to beat rather rapidly; "but, after all, I think it is excusable in this case."

Chlorinda looked distinctly pleased. She said "yes," with a softly rising inflection, and just the daintiest, tenderest little glance in the world.

"Bessie is such an attractive girl," I went on, calmly, "and men pay her such a lot of attention. You can hardly blame me for being a trifle worried; and jealous, too." Bessie Travers is Chlorinda's dearest friend,

and I naturally supposed she would be pleased.

"I don't think I quite understand," she said, coldly.

I am sure I didn't understand at all; but having begun, I was the last man in the world to stop. "I thought you did," I murmured, gently.

"You have never paid her very marked attention," went on Chlorinda.

"Oh, you noticed that?" I asked.

"Of course; so has every one else."

"I'm so glad," I retorted. "I think it very bad taste to pay too much attention to a girl."

"I have heard that people said you were paying me a great deal of attention," continued Chlorinda, relentlessly.

"Surely not that," I protested. "We have been friends, still are friends, I trust," I said, as calmly as I could.

"Oh, yes, indeed; the very best of friends," she replied, hastily, and then she laughed a sad little laugh that made my heart ache.

"Now you must tell me all about it," she resumed, after a pause that was anything but comfortable.

"Your speaking of jealousy brought the thing to my mind," I said, finally.

"I'm afraid I am awfully stupid," suggested Chlorinda. Her voice was icy.

"Why, I thought that if I could only make Bessie jealous," I said, in explanation, "she might get to care for me. You know that she is so lovely that a man might do almost anything to win her." I tried to put a deal of passion and fervor into my

voice, and I flatter myself I succeeded admirably. "Don't you think she is quite the loveliest girl you ever saw?"

"Oh, quite!" murmured Chlorinda; but somehow her enthusiasm lacked the requisite amount of sincerity.

"Her hair, now—" I ventured.

"Oh, if you like red hair!" Chlorinda's is as black as night. "I have always been a little afraid of Bessie. She has such a dreadful temper," she went on, kindly, "but in spite of it she is a dear girl."

"And her figure! Did you ever see such a figure before?"

"Never," she said, positively. I was not quite certain as to her meaning. "Well," she continued, after another pause, "how speeds your wooing?"

"Not very well, I am afraid." That at least was true.

"If I could help—" she began.

"Oh, but you have," I interrupted, hastily; "you have helped a great deal."

"I'm afraid you'll think me awfully dull," said Chlorinda, "but—"

"Why, about the jealousy, you know," I explained.

"Still, I must confess I don't see," she said.

I was afraid to look at her. "Why, if she cares for me, you know," I went on, shamelessly, "I thought my being with you—er—occasionally might make her jealous—"

"Do you mean to tell me that all the flowers you have forced on me, and the bon-bons you have made me take, and the drives and—oh, everything—?"

I bowed.

"You have simply been using me?"

"That," I said, "is such a harsh way of expressing it."

"The truth is not always pleasant," she replied, sententiously.

I hardly knew how to go further; I was fairly at my wit's end.

"Well, how did it work?" she asked.

I resolved on one more dangerous play. "I am not certain," I said. "If I were to tell you about it, perhaps

you could tell whether she cares for me or not."

"Perhaps."

"Well," I began, "night before last, you remember, I took her out on the river. It was a very beautiful night—"

"I don't see what that has to do with it," interrupted Chlorinda.

"I'm coming to that part of it," I said. "Well, you know the moon was shining; and we went up under the willows. You know where you and I went last week. You remember, don't you?"

"No," said Chlorinda. "I have forgotten all about it; and besides they were maples, not willows."

"Oh, that doesn't matter!" said I.

"What doesn't matter?" demanded the dear girl.

"What kind of trees they were," I explained, gently.

"Well, anyhow, she wished to get out of the boat, and I was helping her—you've no idea how lovely she looked in the moonlight—I kissed her."

"How perfectly horrid!"

"She didn't seem to mind," I said, lightly. "Would you call that an encouraging sign?"

"If you hadn't told me, I wouldn't have believed it of Bessie. I am sure mamma won't wish me to know her any longer. I had no idea she was that kind of a girl," she answered, stiffly.

"But where was the harm? You didn't seem to mind it very much when—"

"When what?" icily.

I quailed. I honestly didn't dare remind her of what had happened when she and I were under the willows—the maples.

"Oh, nothing," I said, weakly.

There was another very awkward pause; and then, of a sudden, Chlorinda's manner changed. Under ordinary circumstances I should have known there was danger, but I was so engrossed with my own work that I had become careless. Her friendliness was fairly dazzling.

"I am so glad you've told me this, Mr. Hastings," she said, "because I have a little confession to make to you. I am going to marry Mr. Travers."

"Good God!" I cried, before I had time to think. "You are not going to marry that brute? I won't have it. You cannot marry him. Do you understand?" Then I stopped, for Chlorinda was laughing at me.

"I knew all the time you were trying to make me jealous," she said, when she could speak.

"But if it had been true?" I suggested.

"It wasn't," she replied, triumphantly.

"But if it had been? What then?"

"It would have broken my heart," she said, softly.

"And you'll marry me?" I persisted.

"Certainly not," said Chlorinda. "Nothing would induce me to marry —a jealous man."

"You are positive?" I asked.

"Well, pretty positive," she said, slowly.

"If we were only under the willows now—the maples—" I ventured.

Chlorinda looked hurriedly about her. "I don't see what difference a few trees make," she pouted.



OF COURSE

OH, yes, I'm aware
That he drinks and he plays,
And spends all his surplus
In other wrong ways;
But I love him so truly
I'm certain that he
Will drop his bad habits
Because he loves me.
Oh, no; he's not trying
Just yet to be good,
But he will when we marry—
He told me he would!

WILLIAM J. LAMPTON.



SAD

"I WONDER why these weddings in high life make me feel so sad."

"You probably realize that the bride and groom have such a short time to live together."



SOME people make fools of themselves by never making fools of themselves.

HER PROTEST

IN your lyrics and your sonnets
 You have praised me, I confess;
 You have sung my boots and bonnets—
 All my wardrobe, more or less.
 You have wooed me in impassioned
 Phrases, full of thought sublime,
 And most delicately fashioned
 Into rhyme.

I was happy in the notion
 That my heart had found a slave;
 I was proud of your devotion
 And the roses that you gave;
 I was glad to let love blind my
 Eyes, unconscious of the hint
 That when open they would find my-
 Self in print.

So my fate is to discover
 There's a sordid side to art;
 That the raptures of a lover
 Are not wholly of the heart.
 You would give up all, you tell me,
 If I'd love you; but—how long
 Would it be before you'd sell me
 For a song?

FELIX CARMEN.



COMPROMISING

HUBBY—That friend of mine who stayed at the Summer hotel where
 you were, too, said he had a flirtation with every woman there except one.
WIFE—I wonder which one it was?



THE DREAM OF HIS LIFE

HENPECK—You're never happy unless you are complaining in a loud voice.
MRS. HENPECK—How would you have me?
HENPECK—Unspeakably happy, my dear.

By Harry Baxter Nason

NOTICE—*So many readers object to the title of a novel that the author has left space above in which, after perusing the volume, the reader may insert any title he or she may think best. In this matter there are absolutely no limitations.*

CHAPTER I

It was a lovely June day in the year 1863.

(Two pages are skipped here, the pages being descriptive of the weather and of the sweet month of June.)

Afar down in the meadow the cows were lowing.

(Skip two pages telling why cows lowed and chewed cuds, and that the bovines were owned by James Augustus Fitshugh Montmorency, gentleman farmer.)

Carrylynne, her sweet face wreathed in smiles and her rosy cheeks out-blushing the roses that adorned her chestnut-brown hair, strolled gaily along, humming with her fresh young voice a song she had learned in early childhood.

(Skip nine stanzas of eight lines each of the song that Carrylynne sang.)

Suddenly, far down the dusty highway, the beautiful maiden espied a lone horseman galloping like mad.

(Two pages and nine lines here tell how the horse was covered with foam, how the rider stared straight ahead, while brown bunnies jumped into their burrows, chickens squawked and flew across the road, and thoughts surged in Carrylynne's bosom, no mention being made of her brain.)

On came the dashing rider.

(One full page describes his clear-cut features, the horse, and the man's clothes. Seven lines tell just how the steel-covered hoofs beat on the dusty dust.)

Carrylynne drew aside just as the now riderless horse went by her at breakneck speed.

(In the fourteen and a half pages here skipped are given all the details of the unhorsing of the strange rider, who struck his head against a barbed-wire fence. Four of these fourteen pages are given over to a description of the maiden holding his head in her lap, and washing away the gory blood with water fetched from the creek, which happened to be right there at the right time.)

It was some time before Carrylynne noticed signs of regaining consciousness.

(Two pages are skipped here. They describe the blushes mounting to pink cheeks, our heroine's attempt to make herself scarce before the man could murmur some strange name and call for a "long, cold drink." In the succeeding chapter the strange man springs the same mysterious name, so there is no sense in printing it here.)

With haste the pretty maiden ran like a startled fawn to her modest home on the green hillside.

CHAPTER II

(This chapter begins with a description of Carrylynne's humble home, her aged, widowed mother, with lines of care making creases all over her once sweet face, and closes with some really beauti-

ful language about Carrylynne's accomplishments.)

The wounded man leaned on one elbow and watched the tiny feet carry the fairy-like vision far, far away. Then for the first time he noticed that his impromptu nurse had dropped a sweetly scented handkerchief. Slowly and painfully he crawled over the ant-hills and muddy spots. In a ravenous manner he seized the bit of real lace.

"At last," he muttered between his parched lips, "here is part of her cognomen, 'C. A. B.' Aha! now shall I be a real *Sherlock Holmes*."

(Mixed in with all this matter are two hundred lines, telling of his feelings and thoughts of love, the sweet face that had been haunting him for months, and his many guesses as to which department-store had supplied the lace handkerchief. The chapter ends, leaving him tossing all night in his bed and still worrying about the face that actually haunted him more than ever.)

CHAPTER III

The very atmosphere seemed charged with excitement. People gathered in groups around the village post-office and talked in startled whispers.

The great battle of Gettysburg was on!

(The remainder of this chapter consists of a full and complete story of the first day of the battle of Gettysburg.)

CHAPTER IV

(This chapter consists of 3,487 words, the very choicest to be found in any dictionary, put together in a style unsurpassed by anyone who has ever before attempted to handle English and French mixed. While the chapter is really most beautiful, it merely tells more about the battle. As intelligent readers know history, its publication here is not at all necessary.)

CHAPTER V

James Augustus Fitzhugh Montmorency lay on a dirty cot just in the rear of the fighting line. Over him leaned a sweet, pale face, down which tears were chasing each other like shot going down a tower.

(Nine hundred and eight words of assorted sizes, indicating that this man was the same man who had bumped into the barbed-wire fence in the first chapter, and that this girl was the same girl who had bathed his wound and dropped her handkerchief, so that he could pick it up.)

With a smile of thankfulness and a sigh, Montmorency, one of the many heroes of Gettysburg, lifted his head and opened wide his eyes, only to fall back unconscious on the cot. He had found the haunting face, only to lose it—perhaps.

CHAPTER VI

(Devoted entirely to gossip among the soldiers, all the talk being about the battle. Readers of modern novels know much more about the battle than did the people of the time.)

CHAPTER VII

(Three long months have elapsed. Nothing has occurred.)

CHAPTER VIII

(Another three long months. Nothing has occurred.)

CHAPTER IX

Hidden far away among the green-clad hills of Sea Isle City, James Montmorency had at last found the sweet face for which he had sought so long. And she—she did not at first recognize him as the hero of her dreams.

(It should be explained here that in the second chapter she had dreamed for several nights about James.)

Thus it was that for a time the queer feeling of love hardly had a chance in the bosom of the fair Carrylynne. But suddenly the truth flashed upon her.

Did she know that scarlet scar across the temple? Aye, to be sure.

It was the healing of the wound made by the barbed-wire fence.

(The remainder of this chapter tells how she acted when she met him again. At the end of the nine pages necessary to get them to recognize each other, he draws her to his breast and imprints an impassioned kiss, or something of that kind, on her brow.)

CHAPTER X

"Oh," she murmured, as she softly snuggled up against his manly bosom, and, with one trembling but freshly manicured finger-tip, touched the scar ever so gently, "oh, Jim, I am so happy! oh, so happy!"

(This indicates that everything is ready for the curtain. Such, however, is not the case. The novel is still too short, and readers will find that something happens in the next few chapters.)

CHAPTER XI

Suddenly, without warning, there was a bad break in the quietude. The two souls with but a single thought were rudely awakened to a realization of the fact that there are yet many other thoughts.

(This all refers to James and Carrylynne—Carrylynne Briggles. Her father was old man Briggles, the best oyster-opener at Maurice River Cove.)

These two beings, wrapped in each other and caring for naught outside their own world, were suddenly plunged into sorrow. At the very instant when happiness seemed supreme, a heavy hand was laid on the broad shoulder of the hero of Gettysburg and the barbed-wire fence, and a rude voice spoke:

"Beg pardon, sir, but dinner is served, an' the dinin'-room doors is t' be closed in ten minutes."

With a curse muttered deep down under his breath, James Montmorency gnawed the left side of his mustache, and turned fiercely upon the destroyer of his lover's dream of happiness.

(Nine pages follow, explaining how James passed strictures on the waiter for interrupting his courtship.)

CHAPTER XII

(Carrylynne and James eat dinner.)

CHAPTER XIII

(James is suddenly called to Australia to testify in a patent-medicine suit for infringement.)

CHAPTER XIV

Carrylynne felt as Snyder did when he lost his dog. She knew not where or why the hero of her dreams had disappeared.

(This chapter would have brought tears to the eyes of the reader, but the author dislikes having nice clean pages soiled by tears dripping all over them, and so leaves out over three thousand words, describing Carrylynne's doubts and fears as well as hopes.)

CHAPTER XV

It was just a year from the day of the barbed-wire fence accident. Carrylynne had wandered down to the grassy beach of Sea Isle when she noticed, descending from a steamer that had just arrived, a very distinguished-looking gentleman, accompanied by a suit-case and two sleek bulldogs.

The moment she saw his face she recognized the scar.

It was James Montmorency, back from Australia, and the owner of the two dogs.

CHAPTER XVI

(They meet again, and it would seem that everything is finished.)

CHAPTER XVII

(But James confesses he has lost his fortune. He fears Carrylynne will spurn him. The last paragraph of this chapter leaves the reader very much in doubt.)

CHAPTER XVIII

(No one knows yet. The author in this chapter manages very skilfully to keep the lovers apart, for three more chapters must be written.)

CHAPTER XIX

"Oh, Jim, to think you could ever doubt my love!" Thus spoke Carry-

lynne as the lovers sat on the sandy beach. "I have enough money for both. Years ago, many years, when I was but a child, papa sold a ton of oysters to a man in New York. Last week the New Yorker settled the account, and I am rich enough for both."

(At this point they gurgle happiness.)

CHAPTER XX

(James confesses that he had prevaricated. He has not lost his fortune at all. He still has a house and lot in Jersey City. Carrylynne says she only loves him the more, so they are married.)

FINIS.



THE MISER

IN days of yore there dwelt a man—do not think this a fable—
Who was a miser; and oh, my, sir, he was miserable!
His heart was hard as any stone, and there are those who hint
That e'en his flesh was petrified and turned into skin-flint.

So careful was the man that, for the fear of making slips,
He'd even coin his very words and also purse his lips.
In order that unto the cause of gain he might prove loyal,
Each night he'd drink mint tea and take a dose of pennyroyal.

This stingy man would buy skim milk, no better would he use;
And when he read his paper he would even skim the news.
When people suffer with the grip they often cough for cold;
But not this miser—with his grip, he'd always coffer gold.

So grasping was the man that he his very teeth would grind;
He'd squeeze a lemon till there naught remained of seed or rind.
He'd take whatever he could get, and e'en his best shoes pinched;
And when he took a bath he always sponged, nor from it flinched.

And soon his household, too, became as wretched as was he;
His colored servants far and wide were known as niggardly.
And everywhere throughout the world, in fancy, fact or fable,
A miser is, oh, my, sir, of all men most miserable.

BLANCHE ELIZABETH WADE.



L ONELINESS will undo more women than frivolous company.

THE HAUNTED KNOCKER

By Edith Sessions Tupper

YOU remember when we took that little Queen Anne cottage in New Jersey? I thought I had never seen a more picturesque spot. It was, as you know, situated on a river, the lawn sloping gently down to the water's edge and bordered by a row of stately elms and graceful, feathery willows. There was no road in front. A footpath led along the river side. The cottage was charming. It had an outside chimney, *à la Virginia*, and was covered with ivy and trumpet vines. High, luxuriant hedges of Norway spruce shielded the lawn on both sides from inquisitive eyes. The piazza fronted on the river, and was broad enough for a hammock, four or five chairs and a five-o'clock-tea table. Japanese blinds shielded us from the afternoon sun. Every one who came to visit us exclaimed, "How English!"

There certainly was a suggestion of an English country home about this retired little cottage. So much so that the most pronounced Anglomaniac of all our friends brought me from London a curious, old-fashioned brass knocker for my hall door.

"An electric bell," she declared, "is quite out of place here. It is too American. This knocker I bought in a junk shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, and it once adorned the great front door of a country house in Lincolnshire. I doubt not it has a history."

I was delighted with the idea of having my guests summon me in more novel fashion than by pushing the button, and the quaint, richly carved knocker was duly hung on our hall door.

My family consisted of but three persons—my husband, who was away a good share of the time, my maid and myself. It was seldom we had callers, as we were strangers in that section, our intimate friends being in the city, seven miles away. Very few people passed along the lonely path before our door—a few workmen, a stray bicyclist, an occasional messenger-boy from the telegraph station in the big, stuffy manufacturing town a mile up the river, and once in a great while a tramp or two. My friends in the city never came out without giving me warning, as my shopping often demanded my presence in town and they were afraid they might miss me. So our big knocker was seldom lifted. When it was, it sent no uncertain sound throughout the house.

One morning I was returning from the post-office on the opposite side of the river, when, just as I came around the hedge on the left of the lawn, my maid suddenly opened the hall door with a look of expectancy on her face, which quickly faded into one of perplexity. She glanced up and down the piazza, as if looking for some one, and then gazed at me with a troubled expression as I came up the steps.

"Were you looking for me, Mary?" I asked.

"No, ma'am," she replied; "I did not think you would be back so soon. Did you see any one about, ma'am?"

"No," I carelessly answered her. "Why?"

"Some one knocked just now," said the girl, turning a shade paler.

"Oh, no; that can't be," I said, indifferently. "I should have seen any

one on the piazza. You fancied you heard a knock."

"No, ma'am," she said, earnestly, "I could not be mistaken; I was on the stairs, just going up, when the knocker sounded three times."

"That's remarkable," I said, with a curious sensation; "it must have been some mischievous boy, who ran around the house after he had knocked."

"Perhaps so," she assented; and by tacit consent the subject was dropped.

I was, however, mystified. The house was so situated I could see one entire side from the hedge—the side a frolicsome urchin would naturally have taken had he knocked and fled. There were no boys in that neighborhood who were given to such pranks. It struck me as very strange, but as I was quickly engrossed in other matters I soon forgot the occurrence.

I was destined, however, to be reminded of it in no very agreeable fashion. About a week later I sat alone at dusk in the bow-window that opened upon the piazza and commanded a full view of the hall door. My husband was away, and I had given my maid leave to visit the town up the river, where she had friends.

It was after sunset, and the river was turning black in that weird light which comes after the last rays of the sun have vanished. A breeze had arisen and was whispering mysterious things to the elms, which bowed their heads to listen and then tossed them as if in disdain at what they had heard. I was lonely, and, I must confess, a bit frightened. It was the first time I had been absolutely alone in the house, and all sorts of terrible stories began trooping into my mind.

"Oh, dear!" I murmured, half-unconsciously, "I wish some one were here. I wish some one would come in—"

I paused and sat dazed, trembling, cold. The knocker had resounded loudly through the lonely house—

the knocker! and not a living thing stood on the piazza before the door.

I could not move. As though bound by fetters of iron, I sat, staring through the gloom, out over the piazza.

There was no one there.

Absolute terror seized me. I firmly believe that, if the knock had come again, I should have gone mad with fright. With a violent effort I started to my feet and rushed through the house, out a rear door, and fled across the garden to a neighbor's, where I remained until I saw a light twinkle from my cottage and knew that my servant had returned.

I said nothing of my fright to her or to my husband when he came back. I tried to think I had been the victim of a delusion. I would nearly succeed in making myself believe that the knock had been a matter of imagination, when the memory of that peremptory demand for admittance, by some one or something, would rush over me, and I would be convinced that I had indeed been visited by a supernatural guest.

A fortnight later we were suddenly aroused at midnight by a loud knock. My husband hastily wrapped his dressing-gown about him, and, taking a candle, descended the stairs. I leaned over the baluster rail, anxiously watching. Just as he reached the bottom stair, while his hand was outstretched to turn the door-knob, there came a second imperative knock.

"Somebody's in a hurry," I heard him mutter. Then he opened the door. "Well, I'll be hanged!" he ejaculated; "why, there's no one here!" Then he stepped out on the piazza and looked in every corner.

He came back up the stairs with a look of blank astonishment on his face. "Now, what in the deuce does that mean?" he asked, as he put his candle on the dressing-table.

Then I told him of the knock I had heard; I told how the servant, too, had been summoned in the same mysterious manner. He listened, growing more and more perplexed.

"I'll tell you one thing," he announced, when I had finished, "that knocker comes off our door to-morrow. I don't propose to hold midnight receptions to please any spook, English or Yankee."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there came another furious knock, so loud, so vindictive in tone, that I sank back on my pillow, unconscious. When I recovered, Mary, my servant, was with us. She, too, had been awakened by the angry summons, and in her alarm had rushed down to our room, only to find me in a faint and my husband trying to restore me.

"I haven't liked to bother you about it," she said, after I was better, "but I have heard the knocks again and again when I have been here alone. I tell you, ma'am, this house is haunted."

"It isn't the house but the knocker that is haunted," declared my husband, "and it comes off the door the first thing in the morning."

We heard no more knocks that night, and immediately after breakfast, next morning, my husband removed the knocker and it was carried to the attic, where it lay until we left the house a year later.

Then we went to England for three months. The last thing I put in my trunk was the knocker. I had secured the address of the person in St. Paul's Churchyard, London, from whom my friend bought it, and was determined to learn something of its history, if possible.

But I could discover nothing, in the queer little shop where it had been purchased, that threw any light on its unaccountable actions in America. The dealer had taken it from an elderly person, dressed like a house-keeper, he stated, who had brought it to him one day, and who had merely vouchsafed the information that it came from an old country house in Lincolnshire. So I was obliged reluctantly to forego my investigations.

We made various pleasant acquaint-

ances in London, and among others met a Mr. Rathbun and his wife, who were kind enough to invite us to visit them at their place in Lincolnshire, to see something of English country life.

"The Grange is a gloomy old place," said Mrs. Rathbun. "When we are there we keep it filled with guests, to take the chill off. The place is a combination of Tennyson's 'Moated Grange' and Dickens's 'Bleak House.' We have a ghost and a ghost's walk, and secret doors, and all sorts of delightful horrors. Still, when our friends are with us, we contrive to jog along comfortably."

I shall never forget my first sight of The Grange. It rose from a moat, black, frowning and forbidding. It was surrounded by gloomy yews and gaunt poplars. There was a neglected old pleasure at one side where thorns and weeds ran riot over an old rusty sun-dial. It was, as its mistress had declared, both a bleak house and a typical moated grange. One fancied poor *Marianna* looking through the mouldering casements and sighing, "He cometh not," or stately *Lady Dedlock* walking through the pleasure with haughty mien and heavy heart.

The interior of the house was much more prepossessing in appearance. Modern furnishings, flowers, palms, pictures and statuary combined to mitigate the severity of architecture and the gloom of the dark, low-ceilinged rooms. The apartments assigned to us were on the second floor, directly at the top of the stairs. There were some family portraits on the walls, which greatly interested me. One particularly appealed to me—the likeness of a man's face, beautiful and terrible; a face pallid as ivory, with masses of blue-black hair and heavy, slumberous eyes. There was no escaping those haunting eyes. They followed your every movement with a searching intensity at times quite painful.

"That was the scapegrace, the black sheep of the family," explained

Mrs. Rathbun; "he was a sad rake of Queen Anne's day, although a very fine gentleman. His record was—well, very much the record of all fashionable blades of that time. Dick Rathbun was a gambler, a drunkard, a terror with women; but, withal, it is said, one of the most charming and fascinating of men. Some day I'll tell you all about him and his dreadful fate. He still walks o' nights. I've never seen his shade, but there are people who vow they have. But pardon me, I must leave you now. Another time you shall have the whole story."

I was left alone, and began unpacking my trunks. One of the first articles I took out was that wretched brass knocker I had dragged across seas, hoping to learn its history.

"What a ninny to load my trunk with such trash!" I ejaculated, as I laid the knocker on a small table which stood under the portrait of fascinating Dick. As I did so, I glanced up again at the picture that had cast such a spell over me, and started violently, for it seemed that those heavy, wicked eyes flashed a demoniac look straight into mine. I stepped back a pace or two, and, summoning all my courage, looked at the portrait. The sleepy eyes regarded me steadily.

"Am I dreaming?" I murmured, "or did you intend to convey some message to me, you wicked, fascinating ghost?"

But no responsive flash came from those inscrutable eyes, and as it was time to dress for dinner, I forgot the portrait and made haste with my toilette.

The evening passed delightfully, with music and billiards and a little impromptu dance, and when we went to our rooms we voted English country-house existence a success.

I slept heavily and dreamed strange dreams. In one I saw the portrait move, and down from the frame stepped a distinguished figure, with a haughty, patrician face and heavy, evil eyes. He walked across the floor and stood

on the rug before the open fire, intently scrutinizing something he held in his hands. I rose on one elbow in order better to see what the handsome ghost was examining, and, to my amazement, saw that the long, aristocratic fingers were playing with the brass knocker I had brought from America.

With a sigh I awakened and turned uneasily. The fire was still burning brightly in the grate, its ruddy glow illuminating the dark corners of the room. There was no figure standing on the rug. The portrait regarded me from its accustomed place. The absurdity of the dream struck me, and, laughing to myself, I fell asleep again.

Suddenly I was roused by a loud knocking, coming from the great hall door at the foot of the stairs. The knocking was peremptory and struck a chill of terror to my heart. It reminded me of the imperative summons I had heard thousands of miles away in another country. I sprang from the bed and caught up a dressing-gown. I heard doors opening along the hall, hurried footsteps, murmurs, exclamations. Still that terrible knocking continued. Awakening my husband, I told him to get up quickly as something was wrong.

The knocking on the great hall door was now thunderous; and suddenly, dreadful to relate, there rose on the startled midnight air a frightful cry for help, then a shout of fiendish laughter, dying away into silence. I rushed out into the hall to find my host and hostess standing pale and perturbed, with several half-robed guests about them, asking distracted questions, to which they could receive no satisfactory answer. The great hall door was swung wide open in answer to that determined midnight visitor, though by whose hand no one ever knew. A blast of cold air came sweeping up the stairs. Before that open door yawned a black void. The knocking had ceased, and intense and awful silence brooded without.

Three or four men, including our host and my husband, went down the

stairs. Servants brought lights, and amid the hubbub of voices that of Mr. Rathbun suddenly rang out:

"Good God! Look here!"
"What is it?"
"The knocker—the knocker——"
"Well——?"

"The knocker! who put it on the door? It has not been there for years. It was taken off when I was a boy because of these unearthly visitations. How did it come here? Who——?"

I heard no more, for I turned and rushed back into my room. The knocker I had brought from America, which I had laid the night before on the little table under the portrait of handsome Dick Rathbun, was not there!

Hurriedly I descended the stairs. My husband was eagerly examining the knocker firmly fastened on the great oak door.

"It looks like—" he began.

"It is," I said, in a trembling voice, "it is the knocker I brought from America."

Next morning, when we were all assembled in the breakfast-room, I told my English friends my experience with their brass knocker. All listened in amazement, and when I had finished my story, Mr. Rathbun said:

"It is unaccountable; one of those mysterious phenomena for which there is absolutely no explanation. As far back as I can remember, it was whispered that the Grange was haunted. My father used to laugh at the rumors, but I very well recall an experience quite like that of last night, when everybody was aroused at dead of night by this fearful knocking. My mother, a delicate, timid woman, begged my father to remove the knocker. He did so, and gave it to one of our servants, telling her to make away with it in some fashion. It must have been she who sold it to the dealer in London, for she afterward went there to live with a sister. But what an astounding

thing that this infernal knocker should have crossed the sea twice and have returned to its old place! Yet who put it on the door? Come, now, confess, you joke-loving Americans, was it not you?"

Then I rehearsed my dream of the night before, and when I had ended Mr. Rathbun said, gravely: "Handsome Dick surely walked last night. But what a remarkable freak for a ghost to arrange the very summons by which he was, when in the flesh, called to his doom! He was murdered at midnight by an unknown assassin at that very door, stabbed to the heart by some one who aroused him by repeated knockings. Suspicion fell on a man whom he had grievously wronged, but the crime could not be proved. So for years his restless ghost wandered through this house. After the knocker was removed he rested, but when it was brought back, the Nemesis that pursues unhappy shades evidently forced him to restore it to its former place; and once there, the haunted knocker renewed its ghostly summons. But I have grown quite chilly rehearsing these grawsome tales. My dear fellow," turning to my husband, "will you come into the smoking-room and concoct a few of those justly celebrated American cocktails? And, by the way, James, have you obeyed my instructions about that knocker?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer, "hit is now at the bottom of the lake, sir, where I'm thinkin' no 'obgoblin can find hit."

"Then," responded our host, "we can drink in peace."

When next I entered my room I looked up at the portrait of Dick Rathbun. "Well," I queried, "are you satisfied, uneasy ghost?"

The strange, fathomless eyes regarded me steadfastly. In their slumberous depths there glimmered for an instant—was it my fancy?—an expression of mingled triumph and relief.

A SUMMER NOCTURNE

SOME night, when moonlight floods the skies,
 The light wind shall not call in vain;
 With these soft-drawn, delicious sighs
 My voice shall answer back again.

Not vainly o'er the garden ways
 Will blended scents of roses meet
 With pungent odors of the mays!—
 My heart shall thrill, too, with their sweet.

Dark purple pansies and the deep-
 Folded, red-globèd peonies
 Shall wake, though closed in fragrant sleep,
 To join in my soul's ecstasies.

Some night, it may be dark and late,
 Love's signal shall be surely shown,
 Though now I only dream and wait
 'Mid starry silences, alone.

That night the sky a while shall hold
 Its silver lights and clouds in vain;
 For round me close your arms will fold,
 And on my eyes your kisses rain!

CONSTANCE FARMAR.



A TEST

CLARA—You feel, then, that your love for him is genuine?

MAUD—Oh, I know it. I take such pleasure in making him unhappy.



MY sweetheart once sang in a choir;
 As her sweet voice rose high and still hoir,
 I thought 'twas a bird
 In a tree-top I heard;
 And she certainly was a high-fhoir.



SNANITY is merely the ability to conceal one's insanity.

A SOCIAL AFTERNOON

By Arthur Moray

THE servant announced me. I bowed over Mrs. Caverly-Nash's hand, and grasped the hirsute paw of Nash in tender sympathy. He looked as uncomfortable as I felt, which is saying a great deal.

All around were wonderful dresses and mixed perfumes. I looked out on a tumultuous sea of femininity, with here and there a masculine landmark. The occasion was Mrs. Caverly-Nash's "At Home."

Some later arrivals made it necessary for me to move; but where to go? That was the question. I caught sight of Tom Kelly making his way by me.

"Hello, Tom!" I said, cordially. I do not like Kelly, but it was no time to be particular. "What are we expected—?"

"Yes, quite so, Graham. Oh, how do you do, Miss Forde? May I have the pleasure—?"

The rest was lost. He and Miss Forde plunged into the crowd and were gone. I, a lonely pilgrim, surveyed the room again. I did not know many of the people. They seemed busy, and their conversation blended in a din confusing to my ears. I wondered if there were a side door of escape.

"How do you do, Mr. Graham?" said a voice at my elbow. Mrs. Hollister was regarding me with a mischievous smile. I was glad to see Mrs. Hollister; she is a friend of mine. I grasped her hand with effusion.

"What a delightful tea!" I exclaimed, anxious to say the proper thing under the circumstances.

Mrs. Hollister looked at me and laughed. "You did not appear at all delighted."

"I did not know you were here," said I.

Mrs. Hollister refused suit. "You told me the same thing in—"

"Never mind the year," said I, hastily. "It is enough that you have remembered."

"It was too foolish to forget," said Mrs. Hollister, severely. "It is a silly habit to get into, and I am an old married woman now. Therefore I want my tea. Will you take me out?"

We joined a slowly winding stream of people, and finally reached a room I had difficulty in recognizing.

In every-day life it is Nash's smoking-room. There are solid little tables and big chairs and sofas in it; also, there are many books and magazines. Sporting prints, athletic trophies, horned heads and weapons adorn the walls. Under foot are soft, furry rugs that aforetime dwelt in the Rockies and the pampas. The catch of the cigar cabinet is worn weak, and the pipe rack is filled to overflowing.

Now, a long table ran the length of the room. Behind it bobbed perspiring, black-coated waiters. The best of the pictures—notably those of pugilists of by-gone greatness and scantily clad athletes—had been removed. In their places hung blue Dutch horrors, the flat canal, windmill and pippin-faced women things that are called art. The old rifle that Nash's grandfather had used in the war of 1812 occupied its usual prominent place; it was an heirloom. But some one had tied knots of pink ribbon around the stock and the barrel, and in the muzzle and pan were thrust a few random roses. I fancied that the grim, rust-eaten old weapon, with its mem-

ories of violence and death, smiled sardonically at me. Nash's oars still hung over the fireplace, but the eight-ounce gloves, with which he won the amateur middle-weight championship, which usually showed between the crossed blades, were hidden by a festoon of some silky stuff. The pipe rack had vanished. I wondered how long it would take Nash to get the place in order again.

Sitting down was impossible. We stood, jostled by the crowd, and juggled the food to our mouths. Then we sought a spot of comparative quiet.

"You don't go to many 'At Homes,' Mr. Graham?" said Mrs. Hollister.

"No," I answered; "I find it impossible, as a rule, to get away from the office in the afternoon."

"Have you seen Florrie?"

"She said she would be here, but in a crowd of this size——"

"Here she is, now."

Florrie, piloted by a carefully groomed young man, was making her way toward us. I admired this man; his clothes fitted him wonderfully. His hair was smooth and fairly divided, and he was not perspiring.

"Dr. Maxwell; Mr. Graham."

We exchanged bows. He chattered volubly to Mrs. Hollister.

"Dr. Maxwell is going to get me an ice and then you may take me home," said Florrie, in an aside.

"Where are you going to eat?" I asked, anxiously. "Nobody can find anybody in this crowd."

My question remained unanswered. Florrie and Maxwell swept on in their appointed path, and the press seemed to divide for them.

"What do you think of Dr. Maxwell?" asked Mrs. Hollister.

"He didn't act as if he had any clothes on."

"Mr. Graham!"

"I mean, he seemed used to this make-up," I explained.

"He goes out a great deal, of course," said Mrs. Hollister. "I think a man looks well in a frock coat, but I can't get Billy to wear his at all."

"I saw him in it at a funeral, once,"

said I, in defense of the absent husband.

"He says it is the only place he feels at home in one," remarked Mrs. Hollister, with a sigh of wifely resignation.

"Well, of course he wore one when he married you," I observed. "He didn't look very awkward, really."

"Do you mean to imply that that event was like a funeral?" demanded Mrs. Hollister, indignantly.

"It was—for some of us. You were a very pretty girl."

"You mustn't say things like that—now."

"But you were, you know."

"I don't know. I am afraid I was a very silly one."

"You have not changed at all."

"Jack Graham!"

"In looks, I mean. You made the prettiest mermaid! If you would let your hair down——"

"Hush! Somebody might hear you!"

"—as you did at the Beaches, when I was teaching you to swim."

"Will you be quiet? Even Billy doesn't know that."

"Billy knows I taught you to swim."

"He doesn't know that I was photographed as a mermaid."

"I have the picture yet——"

"Mr. Graham, you told me on your honor, when I was married, that you had destroyed it!" interrupted Mrs. Hollister, in horror.

"—in my heart," I concluded, sadly.

"Oh, if that is all——"

"That is all."

"—you may keep it there——"

"Thank you."

"—with Florrie's," finished Mrs. Hollister, cruelly.

I sighed. "There is a skeleton in every one's cupboard," I said.

"I am not a skeleton," observed Mrs. Hollister, with warmth. Her ambition in life is to weigh in at one hundred and thirty pounds. I consider any addition to her weight unnecessary.

"Certainly not; never mind what

they say," I assented, cordially. "Besides, Billy makes up the average."

"I will not have you make fun of Billy."

"I offered to bet him a box of cigars he weighed two hundred and ten."

"He does not," asserted Mrs. Hollister.

"He said he didn't bet," I ventured.

"I do not approve of betting," said Mrs. Hollister, virtuously.

"H'm! I knew a girl once who won a box of gloves by climbing——"

"Oh, be quiet!"

"—a cherry tree. It was in July, I think."

"What was in July?" demanded Florrie, appearing on the scene, with Maxwell in attendance.

"The Declaration of Independence, for one thing," said I.

"I thought you were talking of cherry trees," said Florrie, puzzled.

"That was in connection with George Washington."

"Ah, yes; George Washington suggested a cherry tree. Washington and the cherry tree suggested the Declaration of Independence, in July, '76. A very interesting mental process," observed Dr. Maxwell.

"I wonder," said I, thoughtfully, "what the cherry tree suggested to —Washington?"

"Oh, he was only a boy then; a boy's thoughts are of no importance," said Dr. Maxwell.

"Of no importance whatever," I agreed. "But in after life they must——"

"It is really time for me to go," said Mrs. Hollister.

"Mr. Graham is walking home with me. Good evening, Dr. Maxwell; I have enjoyed our conversation so much," said Florrie.

"You didn't tell me you enjoyed our conversation," I observed to Mrs. Hollister, as the others were shaking hands.

She withered me with a glance.

"Florrie and I are going to walk home with you," I went on.

"It is very kind of you," said Mrs. Hollister; but I doubt if she meant it.

"Well," said Florrie, after we had left Mrs. Hollister at her own door, "how did you enjoy the afternoon?"

"Not at all," said I, furtively inserting my left hand in my trousers pocket.

"You and Mrs. Hollister seemed to be entertaining each other pretty well. What were you talking of?"

"Oh, all sorts of things—photography and swimming and Billy Hollister's weight."

"What a mixture! And how did you get on the subject of cherry trees?"

"I thought Dr. Maxwell explained that."

"So he did—I had forgotten. Wasn't it clever of him?"

"Very clever," I assented.

"Really, he can almost read one's mind. He knew in a minute all you had been saying. I believe he knows what one is thinking of."

"I hope," said I, "that he will never find the knowledge embarrassing."



THE SILLY SEASON

THE piker struts his brief hour on the turf,
The Summer maiden rules it rather queenly;
While everywhere within the raging surf
We see the fat girl bobbing up serenely.

DESIRE

LOVE distilleth in thine eyes
Such a draught divine,
That I am not overwise,
Draining down the wine.

For, with reeling soul of fire,
Staggering among men,
I am frenzied with desire
But to drink again.

ROBERT LOVEMAN.



EPIGRAMS

FAME'S pedestals are revolving; no wonder great celebrities act queerly when invited to come off them.

Women tell men they detest flattery; but they are furious when they make lasting converts.

The pathos of the stalwart young man with the hoe is nothing compared to the sight of a decrepit old man sowing wild oats.

To expect a mortal to wear celestial wings is folly. This earth is not atmospherically adapted to seraphim.

A man's mother is his ideal; his sweetheart is his dream; his wife, his—awakening.

The most successful man in society is he who has the wit not to be too wise, and the wisdom not to be too witty.

Lovers use each other's eyes for mirrors; and that explains many matrimonial riddles.

If the rich were as uncharitable toward the sins of the poor as the poor are toward the follies of the rich, misery and want would howl like wolves outside more doors.

Much time is given by women to dusting bric-à-brac that might wisely be devoted to ridding their brains of cobwebs.

The woman who confesses to the world an indiscretion commits two.

Antiphonal citations of their conquests are the favorite pastimes of Madame Passé and Monsieur Old Boy.

Truth, like many other virtuous Old Things, can make herself extremely unpleasant.

The ways of some men with a maid are as diverting as those of all widows with a youth.

A mother who can see her daughter married without a sigh could bury her without a tear.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM.

BEHIND GREEN PORTIÈRES

By John Regnault Ellyson

ONE evening Julia said to me: "Do you know, Whitman, you are rather an odd compound? When not all timidity, you are all audacity. Nobody can imagine how you are going to act or what you are going to say. Sometimes you quote Brantôme and scandalize your friends, and sometimes light phrases of mine set your cheeks ablaze like a nun's. By your own account, you were afraid of meeting me for more than a year, and afterward, any place I turned—there you were! You followed me like the end of my gown. In my endeavor to shake myself free I shook off half my friends. You were pleasant enough and amusing in your way, but I could never get you to put on my wrap gallantly, or to pucker your mouth at mine—even in play. You flirted with my cousin shamefully under my very eyes twice in one evening, and, when you touched my hand by accident as we drove home, you trembled, and, looking through the window, mentioned that it would probably snow before morning. For months you prattled like an angel, talked of everything—of everything but love; and, when you did and I closed my lashes, you leaped up and crushed me out of all shape. I didn't see you then for two weeks—somebody had died, I believe, and it took that time to bury the poor fellow. But you came back at last, though hardly at all improved. We have since had a delicious season, in spite of your skittish moods and wild impulses, your improprieties and follies. And now, just now—seeing all your imperfections thick upon you—I am try-

ing to conceive how you are going to play your hand with pa. Do you care for—would you take advice? Well, be a good boy and go down to-morrow and exchange your compliments with a dashing air. Pa looks woefully grim, but he likes a joke. Tell him one and so come to the point. Don't bungle; think of your dear Brantôme and be gay."

I laughed at her amazing charges, because they were so true; and I promised what she asked, because it was just what I wished settled. The matter had already been absurdly delayed. The performance of my duty, over which I had frequently, of late, mused and shivered, seemed quite as simple as making the bold resolve, while sitting in the presence of this wonderful girl.

But I went home and lost heart. My spirits drooped as soon as I got on my pajamas. All the old doubts and fears revived after I lay down, and in the obscurity of my chamber the phantom of Julia's father sat ever before me. It was sad enough, and, the lamentations of my neighbor's parrot being added, I scarcely slept a wink during the night.

In the morning I was extremely ener-vated. I had need of my wits for the task in hand, and my wits were considerably disarrayed. No ideas came into my head until I received, at breakfast, a letter from Gustave telling me that he would leave Atlanta on Tuesday for New York. It was Monday, and I wired him to meet me at once in Andova, where, as he had often said, we might pass some agreeable hours, and where now, at least, I could con-

sult my friend and draw on his wide experience. Before going to the station I patched up a lame excuse in a note of pathos for Julia, and at noon, as the train was moving off, my lackey handed me an answer. Julia wrote:

"You are running; bad luck to you."

The breezy syllables took some feathers out of my cap, but I consoled myself with those that remained. I had achieved my aim—another delay. I regretted leaving the dear, ingenuous girl, of course, and I regretted, also, the necessity of eluding, for a time, the inevitable. I stretched myself at ease, breathed freely once again and felt a real pleasure as soon as I forgot what I was doing; but I was running, and bad luck followed.

I shall always remember Andova. That it is bright, interesting, notable and modern I shall hardly presume to deny. However, one cannot favorably see things if everybody in a place be unknown. Gustave, on Tuesday morning, had not arrived; he had neither telegraphed nor written. I was fretted the whole of the forenoon, and I strolled. On my return I wired my friend and vainly awaited a reply. I still hung about the hotel after dinner, slept an hour, sat in the lobby, dangled my heels and smoked. It was dull—my first day there.

The night was livelier. I visited the Academy by chance, and I found that I did know some one in town—some one whose company I had, for good reasons, foresworn two years before. The footlights were now between us. Madame Brazan was playing *Lady Gay Spinner* in "The Web that Catches All," and, very naturally, I could detect no flaw in her interpretation of the prime character in Gustave's best comedy. I might even have ventured behind the scenes had my friend been with me; but he was elsewhere. After the play I dropped in at Ludlow's, a clean night-haunt, and there I saw two masters of the cue close a brilliant game.

It was about one o'clock, probably, while going through Kemble avenue on my way to the hotel, that my adven-

ture in Andova properly began. At a point where the street was deserted and ill-lighted, I struck the toe of my shoe against a small object that rang and sparkled under the sharp touch. I stooped and picked up what appeared to be a very costly bracelet. I stood still, looking along the street and listening for some moments, and then, slipping the article into my pocket, I turned the corner and passed into the hotel.

In my room, I saw that my bracelet was a garter, and such a garter as few have ever worn. I might use many words and yet convey a poor idea of its unequaled charm. I shall merely say, therefore, that, wrought of fine gold and sprinkled with brilliants, it was the device of a rare craftsman, a lover's jewel, a true poet's caprice, exquisite and distinctly Parisian.

The dainty thing I put under my pillow that night must have colored my slumbers. I dreamed of romantic episodes and perils. I moved in lands beyond the seas, in the far ends of Italy, through forests and on highways, among friends and strange creatures, monks and brigands. I met Julia there, showed her the treasure I possessed, found its mate and lost all three in the veiled recesses of some cave deep in the heart of the Sicilian hills.

I awoke with the jewel in my hand. The childish delight I felt at finding it still in my possession somehow brought to mind the possible despair of its real owner. I rang for the daily papers and searched them. The last of these contained a clear but prosaic description of the article, an offer of \$300 reward, together with an address—C. Auton, No. 3 Tremont street. But this was not the full extent of my discovery; for, glancing down the column of the same paper, I came across a second advertisement, in the reading of which I turned hot and cold several times. Here was a similar brief sketch, though more choicely worded, with an offer of \$400 reward and an address—Edm. Plume, No. 17 Blon avenue. Uncertain that I had made out

the items correctly, I wiped the blur from my eye-glasses, folded the paper and compared the two notices. Their descriptive parts agreed, except that in the first the jewel was mentioned as a bracelet and in the second as a garter.

Truly, I am not in the least fond of riddles and enigmas, but when they are thrust under my nose I attempt to solve them, and usually I fail. I sat for an hour asking myself, one after another, a thousand questions, which I answered in a fashion or reluctantly abandoned; and the only conclusion I could draw was that either of the advertisers might set up a just claim of ownership.

I had risen at ten o'clock. I read the papers and pursued my inquiries in my room, breakfasted there and talked with the servant. At noon, or a little after, I went down into the office of the hotel and left word, in case my friend arrived, that I should be back by one o'clock. I may as well here admit, however, that I did not return on that day or during the night. The fact is, I have never yet returned, nor shall I.

I had chosen my course. I was aware, from what I had gathered from the waiter as to the leading streets and the arrangement of their numbers, that the second address could be less easily reached than the first, and, accordingly, I set out on foot for the nearer point.

The house at No. 3 Tremont street was an exceedingly large mansion, built of rough-dressed olive stone. The porch formed a rather imposing mass. There was rich cathedral glass over and around the handsome mahogany double doors. The dwelling was also distinguished from the others in the immediate neighborhood by the great breadth of its frontage, as well as by the high-cut half-windows on the main story of its foreline.

Soon after I touched the bell-button the door opened and I entered a vestibule on three sides of which were carved archways hung with elegant

portières of dark green silk. The wall-spaces over the arches and the ceiling were frescoed; the floor was tessellated, and I was glad to see that no movable furniture or ornaments marred their pleasing effect. The manservant, whom, in noting my surroundings, I scarcely observed, said, hastily, in a cordial yet deferential tone:

"Ah, sir, they are expecting you!"

Before I could express my surprise at being ushered into an unknown house thus somewhat familiarly, the man had crossed the vestibule, curled back one side of the portière on my right, and dropped it after me. And here was another surprise: instead of going into an apartment of some kind, I simply passed into a hall or corridor, which with its high half-windows ran parallel with the street.

I stopped for a few seconds, looking ahead of me and then looking back. I parted the portières, but it was too late to question the servant. He had gone his way and I could catch the patter of his quick, receding footsteps. I might have followed, if I had known the direction that he had taken. I might have called—indeed, I thought of doing so, but custom does not allow one to halloo like a knave in a reputable abode.

I sauntered through the hall, therefore, until I reached an open door. Perhaps I should have entered. I hesitated. The windows being curtained in part, the hallway was comparatively dark, but the room, into which I glanced, was full of sunlight. The tall, dull satin screen a little inside the apartment, however, cut off my view of the chief objects of the interior. There were only two occupants, I believe, and both were women. One seemed swayed by some strong emotion, and her words, uttered in a low, sweet voice, pathetic and appealing, shot a thrill through my veins.

"They have no pity," she murmured. "Youth and sorrows such as mine and all they have robbed me of—nothing will stay them—nothing. Oh, do not try to deceive me any longer. I tell you I know—I know. I

have no fears for myself—no hope, no fears."

"Sip this, dear madam," said her companion; "it has a pleasant taste."

"No, no, I'll have none of it," responded the other, with increasing agitation in her charming voice. "No, it drives me mad. Besides, I will not aid—I will not aid them in their designs. I see through them now—I know. They have pursued and entrapped him, beguiled him here, where I can—where I will save him. Oh, I implore you——"

There was a sob and then a smothered sound, but it was the echo of those phrases that pulsed in my ears. I recalled the words of the servant: "Ah, sir, they are expecting you." And a new light flashed upon them, a new meaning. I could think of no one else fitting the situation—I could think only of myself.

Is not every one a fool sometimes? I turned and fancied I had retraced my steps, when in reality I had walked to the further end of the hall. Directly in front of me I perceived a door, which did not, as I hoped, lead out of the house, but into a room smaller than that at whose threshold I had lingered a moment before.

The room was low-pitched and furnished in an odd style. The walls, covered with speckled gray cloth, tufted in squares, had the appearance of granite. On the table near one of the angles five candles burned in a brass candelabrum, and close by on a sofa lay a man in an insufferably stiff attitude. His face was youthful and finely moulded, but very pale, and his hands were folded on his breast like those of a figure on a marble sarcophagus. As I stepped into the room, the man's eyes opened. I approached him, seized his hands, leaned over him and asked:

"Where the devil am I, and where's the way out?"

Evidently he heard me, for his lips twisted, and he glanced at me wearily. I waited, but he made no reply. He smiled, I thought. I conceived the notion that he was playing some

somber buffoon's trick, and, losing all patience, I sought to rouse him by slapping his cheeks. This had a curious effect: he flushed slightly, folded his hands and closed his eyes, resuming the posture of the dead so perfectly that I felt sickened and thoroughly chilled.

In the next moment I concluded that I had bungled. I thought of the woman's words, and fancied that here was the unhappy gentleman who had been caught napping, and entrapped. I had taken the plaintive remarks to myself, and now I bestowed them on the pale, inert, outstretched hero.

Very much eased on this point, I was still very much perplexed at my own plight. I looked around and I saw two windows. As a good means of egress offered itself by either of these, I crossed the room, examined them and discovered that they were windows only in appearance; there were the mouldings of the frames, curtains, rods at the top, and the rest was blank wall.

But there were two doors—this way and that; yet for the life of me I could not tell by which door I had entered. I chose the wrong one, passing into a narrow hall, where I was confronted by another problem in which doors figured, for here were no less than eight of them, four on each side, all closed.

Trivial details become conspicuous under unusual circumstances. Had I been more serenely disposed, my sense of humor would have been excited, and I well remember wondering, even in my serious mood at the time, if anybody ever for a moment imagined how many doors an ordinary house contained—an ordinary house; but surely this was a very extraordinary house, thought I, if in no other particular at least in being so easily entered, and so impossible to get out of, resembling, in fact "The Royal Maze" which the ingenious occasionally construct at fairs for the bewilderment of provincial dames and rustic cavaliers.

I brushed against the door nearest

me, and touched the knob. Some one inside screamed, and I heard, also, the splashing of water and the chatter of teeth. As I had no wish to throw any modest soul into confusion worse than my own, I set my face forward, and caught a glimpse of an unclosed room, at the curved end of the narrow hall—a kind of luxurious, large *salon*, in which an unannounced and unwelcome guest might not, perhaps, be regarded as a besotted churl.

I hastened in that direction. I do not know whether I was more surprised than pleased at coming into a lady's presence. The lady, I confess, was of incomparable beauty, one of those noble and ideal beings whom we speak of in our enthusiastic moments as worthy of a shrine. The purity of her features, the splendor of her hair, the sadness of her great eyes prepossessed me in her favor and caused me to say in the secrecy of my heart—thinking of myself as men always do—that here, indeed, was an angel, a saint from heaven, a celestial Beatrice who would pity me, heed my wishes and lead me into the freedom of the open air.

She rose as I advanced. She seemed to know me, though I could not recall her image, save as a part of some remote dream. She smiled and extended both her hands.

The light from the window behind her struck then like a blow against my face, and the whole demeanor of the lady immediately changed. She stepped aside as from a thief. The lines of her lips hardened; her head took a rigid poise; she leveled her flashing eyes at me and indicated the distance that divided us.

"Stop!" she cried.

And so I did. I halted two paces from her feet, at which I should have cast myself in supplication, if I had not at the moment observed a third person in the room—a man who had just entered and who now stood in the light of the second window.

I never experienced such feelings as passed over me—a species of quiver and a sense of amazement that were

absolutely new. I could have sworn I saw my own figure there as clearly as one sees the shadow of himself in the still waters of a pool.

I was deceived, of course. The resemblance was almost purely accidental. The man was about my height, with blond hair and unbearded cheeks; he wore eye-glasses, as I did, and he was dressed, as I was, in a suit of white linen crash. Here the resemblance ended. He was fully twenty years my senior; his body was shorter than mine and thicker, and his legs were of greater length and badly shaped. He had the sphinx-like countenance of a priest, the long, slim, sinewy fingers of a strangler, the steadfast gaze of a fakir, and the positive air of one whose commands are obeyed.

While I looked him over critically, he was watching me. We exchanged no words and it was he who first moved. He stepped to the wall, pressed a button, and said to the attendant who came in response:

"Why are you absent? This is your place. Remain here and give madam your attention."

Then, turning around, he addressed me in the same tone:

"This way, sir."

We passed through a corridor into an admirably fitted reception-room. He seated himself, and pointed to a chair. I remained by choice on my feet, and he, surveying me in a manner that was irritating, demanded:

"Who are you?"

"You wish my history, or my name?"

"Your name."

"Whitman."

"And now your business?"

"I am not at present engaged in—"

"Why are you here, sir, in this house?"

"For the simplest reason in the world," said I, pausing for such words as would most effectually suit my purpose; "I came to return your wife's garter dropped at midnight on Kemble avenue and found there by me."

If I had studied for an hour or more

a set of phrases to astonish and arouse the man, I could not have made a happier selection. In truth, I had concluded that the best way of getting out of the accursed house was to be flung from the window, and I well-nigh succeeded in my aim.

He leaped up, glanced at the raised window and measured me with his eye. But the impulse, though strong upon him, was resisted. Instead of executing his original design, he adopted a less Saxon mode of action and simply loosened his tongue.

"What! my wife's garter?" he questioned, in a shrill tone. "Dropped at midnight—at midnight on Kemble avenue? I say, are you insane or intoxicated, or are you merely an imbecile?"

And perhaps, as he charged, I did look somewhat unwise or dashed or loutish, for I now remembered suddenly that I was calling on the first advertiser, and that he had mentioned the jewel, not as a garter, but as a bracelet. Vexed and very much abashed, I felt, nevertheless, that I must explain, and I did so, necessarily in my sorry way. Drawing from my pocket the daily paper, I showed the two notices and confessed, after putting my finger on the second notice, that I had erred in alluding to this while in the presence of the writer of the first notice.

He seized the paper. I watched him as he read the lines, in which, for him, there lay something that was hidden from me, and I saw his brows gather and his lips whiten. However, before he could speak, I had regained my assurance.

"Where's this article?" he asked.
"I have the garter, not the bracelet."
"My description of it is correct?"
"Perfectly."

"And you still refuse to let me see the thing?"

"I do."

He glared at me for an instant, but turned and stepped back, leaned over the desk and touched a knob at the side of the inkstand. There was the faint tinkle of a bell and some one entered.

"Order my carriage," said he, addressing the servant, "and then get word to Captain McCay, of the third-precinct police station, to meet me at my residence in twenty minutes."

After the servant left the room, my companion took up his hat and said:

"Follow me."

"I decline—at least until I am answered."

"Well, what is it?"

"I want to know your profession and the character of this house."

"I am Cyril Auton, specialist in mental diseases—this my private sanatorium."

"Ah! I thank you. Now, what's to be done?"

"Young man, you have a strange, offhand manner that may be natural. I shall be equally brief and blunt. A year ago, while in Paris, I purchased a set of jewels—necklace, bracelets and garters. Yesterday my wife made known the loss of a bracelet. I relied on her assertion as to what was misplaced or stolen, and I have at present a strong suspicion. In a word, we are going now to clear up the matter."

"In that event, doctor, I am at your service."

There was a short drive, during which neither of us spoke, and then the carriage stopped in front of the physician's residence. We alighted and soon passed into the hall, where we encountered the wife—an attractive, modish woman of thirty, very handsomely attired for the street—just descending the staircase. Seeing us come in so unseasonably, she could not conceal her surprise, no more than I could mine at the unexpected sight of so comely a creature; and my surprise, as well as hers, redoubled at hearing the sudden outflow of the doctor's words—swift and sarcastic and keenly bitter words—touching her recent losses. The beast in the man displayed itself, moreover, in demanding her keys, which she gave up without apparent reluctance; and he, with these in his hand, straightway mounted

the steps leading to the chambers on the upper floor.

I should have acted altogether differently, I thought, had I been in his place; my eyes followed him, indeed, with an expression of undisguised contempt, which the woman perceived, and which I, in turning, saw distinctly reflected on her fine, sensitive features. She put her gloved fingers on my arm and said, in an undertone:

"What are you to this man?"

"Nothing, madam—a stranger."

"And yet you are here—with him."

"I dare say he can't recall my name.

I went to see him about the jewel that was lost and I was brought here; I don't know why."

"Ah, that's the trouble. How very unfortunate! and it's all my fault, too. No; believe me, there's no jewel lost. I missed my bracelet yesterday; I found it this morning. But my husband—he is going to make a discovery. Tell me, may I, for a moment, count upon your favor?"

"In anything, madam."

"Come," said she, and led the way.

I accompanied her down the steps, and at the edge of the pavement I opened the carriage door. The order she gave the driver I did not hear, possibly because I was engaged in congratulating myself that the mystery of the bracelet had now been solved, and in anticipating that heaven would also unriddle for me the affair of the garter.

When seated in the carriage by my side, the lady, like one who has much to say in little time, began:

"Let me thank you in advance for this purely disinterested action on your part; and, oddly as it may sound, let me beg that you forget your noble service."

"I fear I shall always remember the pleasure of it, madam."

"And I—the pain and need and pleasure of it. If you will blot it from your mind, I shall thank you sincerely in my heart. . . . There are only two blocks before us, and I must be brief. I have a friend,

an old, confidential friend, with whom it is necessary I should be put in communication. I cannot present myself at his threshold, but I can go almost as far. You see, we are driving, sir, as fast as the horses can carry us. The carriage will stop under the lindens at the house that adjoins his, and you will step to his door, ask for Major Plume and bring him to me."

"And the street, madam?"

"This is Blon avenue and his house is number 17."

"Major Plume, 17 Blon avenue?"

"Yes, yes—the cottage in the garden—"

"Then, madam, I must explain—"

"Ah, my dear sir," said she, with the petulant charm of a woman in peril, "the horses are slackening and here are the lindens. . . . Go; summon the major, explain what you wish—what you have witnessed, if need be—but by all means bring him here at once." And with a look that urged speed, she added, softly: "My reputation—you understand!"

When a lady's fair fame is hanging by a thread one moves briskly. I crossed the pavement, pushed open the gate, and found myself in a small garden laid off in oblong plots, clean-cut and well kept. The path was graveled, and on either side of it, beyond the borders of clipped privet, the roses were in bloom. At the end of the garden stood an airy little white cottage, from the roof of which a garland of the crimson rambler trailed.

"The lover," said I, "surely loves beautiful things."

I rang and the bell was answered. In giving my name, I begged to see the major without delay, and the servant ushered me into the sitting-room and retired.

The inside was as utterly unlike the outside as sunshine and shadow. I thought, in fact, I had entered a small museum through mistake. The room, though large, was neither bright nor cheerful. The furniture was cumbrous and antiquated; there were souvenirs innumerable and war-like relics everywhere. On the gray

walls were much-bethumbed maps, stained diagrams of battle-fields, framed prints of more than a dozen generals, Indian arrows and twisted bows, sabres and carbines, tasseled sashes and flags, and unsheathed poniards.

"The lover must be of the warrior kind," I said.

Just after I had so expressed myself, the major came in. He did not please me. His figure was lean and erect, but he had a forward dip of the head, and consequently seemed to look up from under his shaggy brows. He was dressed with care; his cheeks had been freshly shaved, and his prodigious hussar's mustache had been adroitly waxed. About fifty years old, slim and dark, he was decidedly a military man with a history; I could read that in the round scar over his eye and the sword-cut on his left jaw, but nature had bestowed on him a type of countenance that marks of honor scarcely improved.

He met me without the civility of a greeting, and remained standing.

"A friend of yours, major," said I, "sends me here—"

"You bring the garter?" he abruptly interposed.

"Ah, yes," I responded, "I have the garter."

I could not account for his knowledge of the fact, the assurance of his tone or his blunt eagerness on this point. Nevertheless, I drew out the packet, unfolded the handkerchief, and placed the jewel in his hands. He began examining it closely.

"But, major, we are losing time; madam bids me say—"

"You know Madame Brazan very well, I suppose?"

"Madame Brazan!" I exclaimed; and then I added, as if it were a matter of no moment: "why, yes, I think so."

His ferocious mustache rose and his teeth glittered.

"Did she choose you because of your blond hair or your pink skin, or the strength of your sinews?"

"I think she chose me because my lip was clean," I answered, and smiled.

His eyes blazed.

"You said she sent you—"

"I assure you she did not send me here."

"You lie!" he cried.

It was the crack of a lash. Something within me flared for a while, but left me cool. I moved back a step and rested against the edge of the table.

"Major," said I, "you have the faces of God's noblemen on your walls, brave things here around you, scars on your person, and yet you're a coward!"

The major grew livid. He attempted twice to lift his head upright, and each time a spring snapped. Quite a terrible sight he was and not a little grotesque. I thought of the doctor and the window; I thought of Julia's father and the parrot; I thought of my gay Brantôme and the lady under the lindens, and I wondered—I wondered why I did not laugh. I was composed and sufficiently nimble-witted, but hardly as light-hearted as I should have been.

I kept my eye persistently on the major, who, after numberless efforts to calm himself, said in a voice that trembled:

"We will settle that, sir; but first we will call on Madame Brazan. I wish proof that she did not send you here."

"You had doubts as to whether I spoke falsely, yet you picked out for me the foulest word in the language."

"Save the one you chose," he retorted.

The major, if not a coward, was a culprit. So much I had gained from the attitude assumed and the tenor of his remarks. It was evident to me that the jewel had passed from the wife to the major, and so from him to Madame Brazan, who, perfidious as ever, promptly made room for some new conquest. Doubtless the galled lover, devising the advertisement as a method of recalling the gift, and ignorant of its real loss, had concluded the vivacious jade offered salt for his wounds in forwarding the garter by his lucky rival. I was revolving these

ideas in my mind, when the major again spoke.

"Sir, I am waiting," said he.

"Indeed?" I replied. "Then let us be gone."

Of course, I had merely the intention of leading him to the curbstone, of bringing him face to face with the unexpected, and of allowing him to digest his astonishment, while I at my leisure took a fine old French leave.

The major and I, going into the hall, put on our hats and passed out on the porch, where at the moment that he turned and closed the door I saw the carriage, on which the success of my plan depended, move rapidly by the house, and I soon heard the rumble of its wheels around the corner. The affair did not terminate, therefore, exactly as I had anticipated; my affairs seldom do.

Though busy with my thoughts, I was alert and watchful. The major was much more preoccupied; silent and absorbed, he walked with the stiffness of a puppet the length of the path. I could see that he had grown fairly unconscious of his surroundings, that he was mutely rehearsing his part in the shifted scene. He paused at the end of the garden, and it was I who opened the gate.

In passing out, he turned down the street. I lingered behind, and, as I looked after him, I saw two men at no great distance coming up, side by side. I recognized Dr. Auton, and I judged the other to be the captain of police. In less than a moment the physician, with eyes only for the major, and the major, delightfully unaware of the physician, walked directly into each other's arms.

At this unforeseen climax, my attention being caught by an old-fashioned country wagon rolling along at my right near the curb, I tripped lightly across the pavement and threw myself into the vehicle, unobserved even by the driver sitting lazily and unconcerned on one of his mules.

My castle of refuge, swaying on its

huge wheels, continued in motion. I could tell when we got off the street and on the road, though the road was not so very bad after all. I was jostled about a little now and again, but there were some pieces of bagging, of which I made a pillow, abundance of straw under me and enough of the torn hood above to screen me from the sun. I felt thankful. I enjoyed my tranquillity of mind for half an hour or so, and then I reveled in the luxury of a semi-doze.

It was twilight when I awoke. The wagon had halted and the countryman stood on tip-toe staring at me. I got out and dusted myself.

"Where are we?"

"Place called Arlington."

"How far from Andova?"

"Ten mile off."

"Any train going north soon?"

"One ought to be w'istling now."

"Where's the station?"

"Yonder."

"Here!" And I tossed him a gold piece.

"Golly!" he cried.

"By-bye!" said I.

"Luck!" said he.

And I had luck. I reached New York in the morning, snug and sound. At noon I called on the father of a most adorable girl. I did not bungle; I touched his only weak point. I set him laughing at the adventure here related, and before I finished my story I arranged the matter I had seriously at heart.

That evening Julia said:

"Of course, I missed you, but I can't say I missed you very much. Gustave is such a rare good comrade. He's like more than one character in his comedies—so witty and gallant and suave! He arrived the day you left. And the rest of the day, and the next, and Wednesday—oh, what times we had!—what gay, fine times! But last night he came to me with tears in his eyes, with a long, long face. He showed me your belated telegram from Andova, and said that she was playing there—Madame Brazan. It

was this, it seems, that made him sad. He imagined you might, perhaps—you see, he loves you so! Poor Gustave! he pleaded so hard that I—yes, I let him go in search of you! Honest, now, do you think madame is as pretty as ever? Tell me, does she still dazzle the dear boys?"



THE GRAYBEARD

TWO eyes, Mabel, that softly shone,
Whate'er their hue, have often thrown
About my heart a tender spell,
Whose strength no whispered word could tell
Nor looks of coldness e'er dethrone.

One glance from drooping lids alone,
What wondrous seeds of love they've sown!
Their power for pain I know full well,
Two eyes.

Yet, Mabel, now that youth has flown,
Love's haunting strain is faintly blown,
Like music from an ocean shell;
No storied charms can yours excel,
But I, alas, with age have grown
Too wise!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



HER MISTAKE

CORA—Why was I wrong in having my hand read?

MERRITT—Because, my dear, your face is your fortune.



A DELICATE POISE

MADGE—Why do you treat Charlie so coolly when Jack is around?
DOLLY—I'm engaged to both.



EXPLAINED

"**T**HEY say the first year of married life is the hardest of all."
"Well, why not? They see so much of each other!"

THE GAIN AND THE LOSS

By John Winwood

AS Ellsworth turned from Broadway into the Avenue he wondered a trifle resentfully at the changes that had taken place since his feet had last trodden this familiar way. He had been gone from New York somewhat over a year, and the city in that time seemed to have fallen into a chaos from which it was slowly readjusting itself.

Unfamiliar many-storied buildings frowned at him. He passed continually over wooden bridges to the sound of blasting. Everywhere it appeared something was being done, hammered or destroyed. He missed here and there the old landmarks he knew. There seemed a modicum of familiar faces. He wondered drearily how long he would turn and peer for one face that he had last seen with the strange dignity of death upon it.

In the unfamiliar ways he had gone in the past year he had accepted Stratham's absence philosophically, and filled the want of him with the unaccustomed sights and sounds they had not known together. But here, in the old bailiwick common to both, the man seemed at his very shoulder; the sound of his voice was fresh in Ellsworth's ears, the sight of him in his eyes. It seemed that at the turning of a corner their hands might strike, and realization was difficult.

He and Stratham had lived so close, had so feasted, starved, and laughed together, that the man's death had been like the lopping of a part of Ellsworth's being. Even the woman had never come between them. The joy of Stratham in his joy had doubled it. The sympathy of Stratham when he

lost her had blunted the edge of grief. But then Stratham had died in less than a month after Ellsworth's romance had snapped and broken, and this larger grief, like the prophet's snake, had in a way absorbed the lesser.

He told himself this as he approached her house; nevertheless he was conscious that he thrilled expectantly as he drew nearer.

She had sent for him—her letter had been one of the first he had found at his club—a few formal words that asked an interview, and his wonder as to what the nature of it might be was tinged with a faint, delicious hope that defied his judgment.

It was a May afternoon, full of steady, slanting sunshine and half-defined flower-scents. Ellsworth was a man to whom the occult held no possibilities; yet, as he went up the steps to her door, he could have sworn that Stratham went with him step by step, preceded him across the threshold, and was first in the room where she waited. Then, as his hand fell on hers, he forgot everything but the fact that he had been hungering for the touch of it, and the knowledge that he had no right to keep it in his own stung with a new intensity that alarmed him.

In his first glance Ellsworth saw that she looked ill, older; that a woman's eyes looked at him from the girl's face, and that she was nervous, and for some unexplained reason this hurt him cruelly. Still, it was natural that a girl should show some confusion at the sight of a man whom she had not seen since the day she had given and he had accepted his dismissal, and

he was conscious of a certain vague pity for her and a desire to put her at ease.

"It was good of you to ask me to come to-day," he said. "I should have come anyhow, but it was nice to think you wanted me. I met Mrs. Tracey in Paris. Her son is in the embassy, you know."

"Yes," she said. There was no show of interest in her voice. She seemed to be nervously preparing for something that she dreaded, yet desired. She did not look at Ellsworth as she spoke.

"You must have missed Mr. Stratham horribly," she said. "You were such friends—you have been friends so long. Somehow I always think of you as being together. I almost expected him to come in the room with you to-day. You came so often together."

She was twisting a fold of her dress between her fingers nervously. Ellsworth caught at the sympathy in her voice—it was the thing he needed.

"We are friends still, please God," he said, simply. "The friendship lasts when the rest goes. I think I never missed him as much as I do to-day. Strange that you and I should both have the same fancy! I, too, expected him to come in the room with me. He has seemed to be at my shoulder all day. I know how David felt, I think, when he turned to look for Jonathan."

He smiled at the girl, but the sudden pallor of her face startled him. She leaned toward him. There was determination in her eyes, but with it an appeal that was piteous.

"Have you nothing to tell me?" she cried. "Nothing? I have wondered and waited so. I *had* to send for you, and now that you are here, have you nothing, nothing to tell me?"

Ellsworth's amazement showed blankly on his face.

"I don't understand you," he murmured. "What do you mean?"

"You were his friend," she said; "you were with him when he died, when he was ill. Did he never—" the wistfulness of her voice made it a whisper—"never speak of me, never

want me? Oh, you were his friend, you knew how things were with us. Why do you pretend not to understand?"

"You are speaking of Stratham?" asked Ellsworth, dully; "of Stratham?"

"Of whom else?" she flashed. "Oh, Jack, I have wanted so to see you—to know. Don't be cruel to me! Don't take revenge that way. Forgive me, I didn't mean that, but I am so hungry for it."

"Wait a moment," said Ellsworth. He walked to the window and stared down into the street. His brain was chaotic. His face had become white as he gazed at her.

"You mean," he said, "that Stratham was in love with you, that you loved him and he knew it—you were to marry him?"

She recoiled from the question as from a blow.

"He loved me," she cried, more in passionate defense to herself than to Ellsworth. "I knew he did and you knew it. When our engagement was broken, yours and mine, he told you so himself that very night. Why, what other reason had I?"

Something seemed ticking her last words loudly in the back of Ellsworth's brain. "Reason—what reason? what other reason?" It was the question he had asked himself so often; the question he and Stratham had spent hours in an attempt to solve. Stratham! The awful grotesqueness of it all seemed grinning at him like a devil-mask.

"Well?" the girl said, impatiently; "well?"

But Ellsworth remained silent. He was conscious only of a great desire to be alone, to rest his head in his hands and think and remember.

"There is really nothing I can say," he began, at last, "if you will pardon me."

He stretched his hand for his hat, but the girl interposed. She seemed to have grown very quiet of a sudden; the maidenly confusion and timidity she had shown were thrown aside as a

garment its wearer had outgrown. She put her hands on Ellsworth's arm.

"Jack," she said, "look at me. I'm not pleading with you now, and I'm not demanding. I'm not asking you a favor on account of what we were once to each other, or what we may be to each other now, but I'm speaking as one human being to another, that is all. If you knew how I have been looking forward to this meeting with you—the one person to whom I could talk of him, who could talk to me—because it was only we three who knew! If you will tell me anything he ever said of me, any foolish little thing, even if it was only that my hair was pretty or my eyes—oh, not that!—but anything! It's just a crumb when one has been starved. You can't be inhuman enough to deny that!"

"Great heavens," thought Ellsworth, "how the child is suffering!" It seemed the only tangible thing in a world of illusion.

"Before I answer you," he said, slowly, "I wish to ask you a question—just one or two. I may have known and forgotten, or I may wish to hear again. I'm afraid of blundering, perhaps, but if you will answer me simply, I think—I am sure I can help you. It was because you and Stratham had fallen in love with each other, and he had told you so, that you broke your engagement with me?"

"Certainly," she said; "you knew that."

"It was only a question," said Ellsworth, "and you knew, of course, that Stratham had told me?"

"You were so generous, Jack," she said, softly. "We—we loved you for it."

"Yes?" said Ellsworth.

He was conscious of a horrible, insane desire to laugh aloud as beffited a clown in a farce; he had fondly imagined a tragedy, but the girl's eyes stopped him.

"You will tell me now?" she pleaded.

Ellsworth walked to the window and back again. The very soul of him seemed in a revolt against his

will. They die hard who are stabbed of their beloved, and he had loved Stratham with a love beyond a brother's, and Stratham had returned his affection to the extent of betraying his every trust and putting a fool's cap on his head. He could take his revenge gloriously now. With one word he could turn the girl's idol into a thing unclean, and surely if in any way the dead could be hurt, that part of Stratham which still lived would wince at what he might say. To hurt Stratham? An hour ago the very blasphemy of the thought would have horrified him; now it filled him with a joy great to the verge of exaltation.

He turned sharply to the girl, but the sight of her face barred the words from his lips. She was so young, so pitiful! The weapon he might use against Stratham would wound her in his wielding of it. She had suffered enough, too much to be dealt another blow by a hand that loved her.

Ellsworth was not a good liar, but there was no hesitation in his voice when he spoke.

"You are quite right," he said. "He loved you dearly. There are some things men cannot say to each other, but I knew that. You know he died in less than two hours after the accident, and he was unconscious to the last. There was nothing and no one he spoke of."

Before Ellsworth's eyes, as he spoke, the scene flashed again: the white hospital cot, the doctor's pitiless voice in his own ears, Stratham's white face on the pillow; his eyes, his whisper, his last poor grasp on earthly things for that other woman who knelt beside him with face more death-like than his. That woman had, doubtless, fairly forgotten by now, and yet Stratham had loved her as few women are loved. But this girl, who, at the best, had been the sport of an idle hour, a sociological study, perhaps, for an empty day or so, would go widowed all her life from the loss of him. If he had loved her, Ells-

worth's own wrong had seemed a little thing and her grief less worth resenting, but the sacrifice both had made for one man's pastime seemed, from the very futility of it, to be monstrous. "If he had been honest with one of us, at least," thought Ellsworth, "this thing might be easier now."

"I would have gone to him," the girl was saying, brokenly, "but I knew nothing until—until afterward. I am glad to think he didn't need me—didn't want me. If you knew how that thought tormented me sometimes, that he might have wanted me—and I not there——!"

"That, at least, you may be free of," said Ellsworth, gently. There was no irony in his voice.

"And he spoke of me often?" said the girl. "You said he did. Oh, I won't bother you with any more questions, but if you will tell me just one thing—you have helped me so much, you don't know how much—just a little thing."

Ellsworth looked straight in her face. His eyes were steady, but his voice to his own ears sounded like that of a stranger.

"He told me," he said, "the day before he died, that it was the dearest wish of his heart one day to make you his wife; that——"

The girl's cry interrupted him; there was a note of very rapture in it that hurt Ellsworth like a blow. Her face was transfigured with a joy that made it radiant.

"Oh," she cried, "he had never said that, even to me—not in words, not in words—but I knew, I knew! oh——"

She took Ellsworth's hands impulsively in her own. "I can't thank you," she said—there was a sudden mist of tears in her eyes—"but I shall bless you all my life long. If you knew how you have helped me! If there was ever any doubt—I don't mean that there was, but we women are fanciful sometimes—any horrible delusion, you have put an end to it forever, and I can't even thank you decently. You have been such a friend to both of us always, and you will come again soon? We have so much to talk about!"

Ellsworth made his way to the Avenue slowly. People passed him in a perpetual, laughing stream; hurrying hansom carried their occupants in an endless procession between the curbs. It was an hour when New York turns from business to pleasure, an hour that he and Stratham had lived and enjoyed a thousand times; yet no face he knew seemed to look from the crowd in his own, no step he remembered sounded beside his.

Ellsworth walked as a man from whose shoulders a burden had been lifted while he slept, and to whom the loss of it seemed greater than the weight.

"To have lost him twice!" he said, bitterly.

He paused as a keen realization of the truth forced itself upon him. Suddenly he knew that though for him Stratham had never died before this day, the friend he loved had never lived.

"At any rate," thought Ellsworth, and there was more of tenderness than mockery in his smile, "at any rate, I have created a ghost for her."



A FILLER

STONG enough to play the races,
But to work he was too ill;
Tried to fill 'way up on places,
Now he looks for one to fill!

SI JOHNSING.

UNDER THE WHITE FLAG

By Caroline Newnes

PLACE—Monterey. TIME—Summer of 1902. SCENE—The ballroom at Del Monte, where a cotillion is being danced. A strikingly handsome and courtly old couple enter and take seats in an alcove.

HE—How quiet it is! Youth takes its pleasures soberly, these days.

SHE—Ah, but we understood how to enjoy life.

HE—In the early fifties in San Francisco.

SHE—So long ago! Is it possible? In those days we were each too occupied in our own chase after happiness to notice others.

HE—And in those days was cast the soft entrancing glow of candles; now, in these, this electricity must rout the god of love, for who would dare romance beneath its searching incandescence? The years bring many changes. Only the bright spirit behind your eyes remains; Time, expert old thief that he is, has failed to steal that.

SHE—The same pretty speeches, Henry! So a successful life has not made you forget.

HE—Nor has it made you believe me. I can still say such things to you, and mean them also.

SHE—No, not to me, Henry. Though, having grown honest with age, I will confess that I always enjoy admiration. Ah, your grandson has just favored my granddaughter. How strikingly he resembles you! Here they come. In you and in him I seem to have the past and present each before me. Were there a mirror I should see my own white hair. The spirit remains young; but Time has folded his flag of truce about my head lest I should forget—

HE—Forget, Nora?

SHE—Yes, dear friend, forget that my youth has vanished.

HE—You're not the only one with that flag flying. It is fifty years since at your wedding we bade each other a hasty farewell. We little imagined then that when we next shook hands it would be under the white flag.

SHE—No; but you retain your old firm grip, Henry—such as you had before you became engaged. I like it best.

HE—Had you only told me, Nora, you should have had no other.

SHE—To-night our grandchildren appear to have found what we never missed.

HE—The old indifference—always the same. Years ago I struggled to win your favor and cherished a hope that I had gained some slight advantage over your numerous suitors, but only to have you undeceive me immediately.

SHE—Ha! ha! We were both gay deceivers once! Old Mother Grundy would have been shocked if she had heard of our lunch. You've not forgotten?

HE—Forgotten the jolliest occurrence of my life! You swore me to secrecy, and on my honor, Nora, I've never mentioned it to a soul.

SHE—Or to a flounder! Neither have I. But what spirit of mischief prompted you?—the sober, steady individual, not adventuresome; while as for me—well—some of my friends would have been surprised.

HE—You don't regret the occurrence?

SHE—Regret? Never. Why, I could—er—er— How happy our grandchildren are!

HE—We had a private room at the Castilian. The waiter evidently took us for a newly married couple, which disgusted you; you said that any stupid ought to see we were not double-knockers. You made me promise, cross-my-heart-and-hope-to-die, if I ever told. We were each engaged. Only, your engagement had been announced while mine was not.

SHE—Aha! Then you were as naughty as I.

HE—Which seems to comfort you.

SHE—It does, immensely.

HE—I had been off on an engineering trip. You, also, had been away. We arrived in San Francisco on the same day—

SHE—And hurrying from opposite directions to turn a corner on Sutter and Montgomery streets, almost bumped into each other. You cried "Hello!" Then the wind took your hat and rolled and slipped and tumbled it along the sidewalk, while you followed, stumbling and zigzagging, and being—oh, so amusing in your efforts to catch it! Afterward, it must have been my laughter which confused you into proposing that we lunch together. And that evening! What a time I had with the family accounting for the day! I remember thinking it might be interesting to compare prevarications with you; but the only times I saw you again were at your wedding and at mine, where there was no opportunity. Why, that was half a century ago, and we're sitting here gossiping as of yesterday! The silver hare you gave me still serves as a paper-weight on my desk.

HE—And only this morning, as I took from the shelves the book you sent me as a souvenir of our luncheon, the card fell out, on which you had written:

Away with care and melancholy!

In memory of our March-hare madness,
Forget them all, and of our folly

Think kindly. Life needs all the gladness.

SHE—My philosophy of life, not Kant's. I scribbled it in the book-store while the clerk waited. Such a nice clerk! Well, the gay old times are gone.

HE—Let's revive them. You just remarked that we were talking as of yesterday. Why can't we lunch together to-morrow? The old place still exists.

SHE—Henry, what *would* people say? We mustn't always demoralize each other, though it's strange that whatever there is of unconventionality in me always responded to you as to no one else. And we were children together.

HE—If I had only realized! Discussions are proper beneath a flag of truce, aren't they? All my life I have been searching for my ideal of happiness, and notwithstanding that I have been successful in my profession, it has escaped me. Often I have deceived myself into believing that I had almost reached it, but on approaching closer, I found I was mistaken because the object wasn't *you*, Nora. Full fifty years you have reigned queen of my affections. You have had a stormy, a most rebellious kingdom. Pride has caused many a revolt. During such a time I became engaged and married. While my wife might enter into the hall of my heart, she had no knowledge of its inner court, for that has remained untenanted save by glad memories of you. So memory has been ever your ally, and, strive as I would, I could not banish its resurrections of your words and glances. Thus you, provoking and indifferent, have ruled for over fifty years, and now, acknowledging my defeat, Nora, I surrender. There may be snow on the roof-tree, but there's warmth and good cheer beneath. Your subject invites you to lunch to-morrow. Shall I not offer my queen a jubilee? Nora, will you come?

Just here they are interrupted by that charming old beau, Colonel Lun-day. The two men are introduced, and then, with a gracious smile and saying "Until to-morrow," the lady accepts the proffered arm of the gallant colonel.

QUERY—Is there any illumination too dazzling for Cupid, or any flag that he respects?